

CITY-WIDE CONFERENCING AS A CATALYST FOR CITY GOSPEL MOVEMENT:  
LESSONS LEARNED FROM MOVEMENT DAY

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To my wife, Sunny.

I will love you always.

*The church began in the city, Jerusalem, and the church will end in the city, the New Jerusalem.*

– David Currie, “Ecclesiopolis”

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Finally, this thesis-project has only further highlighted for me the grace and vision of our God and creator. May he receive all the glory!

## ABBREVIATIONS

GTGB: Greater Things for Greater Boston

MD: Movement Day

MDE: Movement Day expression

## ABSTRACT

This thesis-project explores the potential of the Movement Day conference to catalyze a city gospel movement. The goal is to provide theological foundations and practical models for leaders engaged in collaborative kingdom work in urban settings. The author writes from the setting of Boston, MA, where city leaders are engaging with the question of whether the Movement Day concept would be appropriate for Boston's context. Six practitioners who have led Movement Day conferences in their cities were interviewed to unpack the theological vision and best practices of Movement Day.

## CHAPTER 1

### THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

#### Introduction

In 2015, the author was invited to attend a two-day conference in New York City called Movement Day by some Boston-area Christian leaders. These leaders were part of a network called *Greater Things for Greater Boston* (GTGB). At Movement Day, we were introduced to the vision and language of “catalyzing city gospel movements”. During the conference, the Boston-area leaders met together to reflect on the content presented. One question that was asked but ultimately mooted was whether Boston should host its own Movement Day expression. In 2015, GTGB leaders did not have adequate information or consensus to answer this question. Subsequently, the author was invited to formally join the steering team of GTGB, and in the Spring of 2018, was asked to become part of a three-person Directional Leadership team for GTGB.

In November 2018, the organizers of Movement Day hosted another conference at the Museum of the Bible in Washington, DC, called the “100 Cities Conference” inviting Christian leaders from over 150 global cities to gather and consider the question of how to catalyze gospel movements within their cities. As a newly minted directional leader for GTGB, the author was invited to be part of a four-person team that would represent Boston. The goal of the 100 Cities Conference organizers was to connect global city leaders together, but ultimately to encourage each city to host their own Movement Day expression. This time, the GTGB

leadership intentionally engaged this suggestion and is considering a possible Movement Day Expression for the Spring of 2021.

This thesis-project will seek to answer the question: should a city host a Movement Day expression. This question has two underlying components:

1. *Why* should a city host a Movement Day expression? In other words, can a Conference effectively catalyze a city gospel movement?<sup>1</sup> Is this an effective use of time, energy and resources?
2. *How* should a city host a Movement Day expression? What are the key principles and practices of organizing and hosting a conference that will effectively lead to city gospel movement?

This thesis-project will endeavor to answer these questions in three parts. First, this thesis-project will develop a theological framework that examines in turn the concepts of city, gospel, movement and conferencing or gathering, before synthesizing them together. Second, this thesis-project will review some of the extant literature regarding city gospel movements. Finally, organizers of successful Movement Day conferences will be interviewed in a semi-structured format to ascertain their specific ministry context and goals, best practices and practical lessons learned and finally the data available to demonstrate gospel movement impact in their respective cities.

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1. While these questions assume that a conference will be a “Movement Day” conference, this thesis-project will also ask the question whether the Movement Day branding is helpful for the Boston context.

## Greater Things for Greater Boston

GTGB began in 2010 (the same year as Movement Day) as an informal “network of missional leaders stubbornly committed to one another and to accelerating Christ’s work in Greater Boston”.<sup>2</sup> The network was the initiative of Grace Chapel, a multi-site church in the Greater Boston area, with the intent to strategically bring together Christian leaders from both suburban and urban contexts, to build relationships and partnerships for the flourishing of Greater Boston.

Since 2010, GTGB has hosted over a dozen “Conversations”, designed to highlight the work that God was already doing in Boston as well as facilitate strategic conversations to address unacceptable realities of the Greater Boston area. See the following table for a list of GTGB conversations.

Table 1. List of Greater Things for Greater Boston Conversations

Date	Speaker(s)
May 5, 2010	Dave Schmelzer <i>Author of: "Not the Religious Type; Confessions of a Turncoat Atheist"</i> <b>“Thoughts on Ministering in New England – Fresh Eyes”</b>
March 31, 2011	Tim Keller <i>Video Clip from Lausanne Conference, Cape Town, RSA</i> <b>“Reaching Cities”</b>
Nov. 9, 2011	Wesley Roberts and Paul Atwater <b>“Church-School Partnerships”</b> John Dickson: Video – Humility in Learning from Others

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2. Greater Things for Greater Boston mission statement, June 2018. Internal document.

Table 1. List of Greater Things for Greater Boston Conversations (continued)

May 2, 2012	Stephen Um <b>“Why Cities Matter: To God, the Culture and the Church – Part 1”</b>
Nov. 7, 2012	Stephen Um <b>“Why Cities Matter: To God, the Culture and the Church – Part 2”</b>
May 7, 2013	Chip Sweeney, <i>Unite Atlanta</i> <b>“A New Kind of Big: Background, What We Learned, and the Future”</b>
Oct. 23, 2013	Andy Crouch, <i>Executive Director of “Christianity Today”</i> . <b>“Greater Things for... Our Communities. . .Our Cities. . .New England”</b> <i>A Partnership with the Shoemaker Center for Church Renewal of the Ockenga Institute</i>
March 27, 2014	William Gross Chief of Police, Boston (GTGB Steering Team only)
Dec. 4, 2014	Ray Williams <i>The Nehemiah Network</i> <b>“Building Bridges of Influence and Impact”</b>
May 21, 2015	David Wright and Doug Hall <b>“How Wolves Change Rivers and Churches Change Cities”</b>
June 2, 2016	Rev. Liz Walker and Collen Sharka <b>“Trauma and Spirituality” and “Can We Talk?” An Interactive, Participative Community Conversation”</b>
June 13, 2017	Lisa Slayton, <i>Pittsburgh Leadership Foundation</i> <b>“Just Work: Why Good Work, Well Done, Transforms a City”</b>

In the Fall of 2017, GTGB organized a retreat for 30 selected Christian leaders based in the Boston area from church, non-profit, workplace and government spheres in Woodstock, Vermont. The question posed to the group (and then discussed over the three days) was whether there might be a synergistic work that God might be calling the group to. One outcome of this retreat was the founding of the Boston Collaborative, an organization seeking to connect Christian workplace leaders to one another, and to opportunities to participate in kingdom work in Boston.

### **Movement Day: History and Goals**

In 2009, seven leaders from Redeemer City to City, the New York Leadership Center, and Concerts of Prayer Greater New York met together in Manhattan.<sup>3</sup> Their immediate goal was to discuss research that had recently been conducted by the Values Research Institute, which indicated that Christianity in Manhattan had grown by a stunning 300% between 1989 and 2009. The leaders decided it was important to meet and share with other city leaders what God was doing in cities around the world and decided to organize a conference to be held in September 2010, which would be called *Movement Day*. Mac Pier (founder and CEO of the New York Leadership Center and former President of Concerts of Prayer Greater New York) writes that the macro themes for this conference would be Cities, the Gospel and Movement:

We wanted to drive a stake in the ground and proclaim the importance of understanding *cities*. We wanted to make sure that our message was *gospel*-centric – we worship a Savior who is impacting the world primarily through cities. We believe

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3. The history of Movement Day is told by Mac Pier in his book *A Disruptive Gospel*. Mac Pier, *A Disruptive Gospel: Stories and Strategies for Transforming Your City* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2016), 50-61.

in the power and necessity of *movement*; the status quo is unacceptable.<sup>4</sup>

The first Movement Day gathering was thus held at Calvary Baptist Church in Manhattan on September 30, 2010. Eight hundred leaders attended with over five hundred coming from outside of the state of New York (including fourteen other countries). The first Movement Day had a simple structure. In plenary sessions in the morning, Tim Keller first spoke about the meaning and importance of gospel movements, Bill Hybels followed addressing leadership in movements, and finally Brenda Salter-McNeil spoke about crossing racial barriers to foster unity in a city movement. In the afternoon, leaders joined topical strategy groups on several issues germane to advancing the gospel in cities.<sup>5</sup> The goal as described in the chapter title was “missional unity”.<sup>6</sup>

Pier claims the uniqueness of Movement Day is found in their strategy of addressing three fundamental questions:<sup>7</sup>

1. “Where are we today regarding some specific pressing reality in our city?”
2. “Where do we want to be in ten years regarding that reality?”
3. “How do we get there from here?”

Since 2010, the Movement Day conference has been held annually in New York City and has expanded to multiple global cities. In 2014, Dallas hosted its first Movement Day. The

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4. Pier, 53.

5. Pier, 52.

6. Pier, 50.

7. These questions can be found in Pier, 53.

New York Leadership Center which has been the primary organizer in 2018 changed its name to MOVEMENT.ORG to further align itself with the Movement Day conferences and plays an important advisory role in helping Christian leaders in various cities hold their own Movement Day expressions. Since 2010, here is a list of cities that have held a Movement Day expression and are planning a Movement Day expression for 2020 (see table 2).

Table 2. Movement Day Expressions (outside of New York City)<sup>8</sup>

<b>Began 2014:</b>	<b>Began 2015:</b>	<b>Began 2016:</b>
Dallas, TX	Pretoria, South Africa	Port-au-Prince, Haiti

<b>Began 2017:</b>	<b>Began 2018:</b>	<b>Began 2019:</b>
Chennai, India Cape Town, South Africa Durban, South Africa Nairobi, Kenya London, UK Phoenix, AZ	Athens, Greece Oslo, Norway Charlotte, NC Hong Kong Australia Doncaster, UK MD Africa - Nairobi, Kenya	Africa - Johannesburg Mumbai, India Dallas Fort-Worth Dubai, UAE Africa - Pretoria Kampala Perth, Australia New Zealand Uganda Africa - Durban Africa - Zambia Chennai Africa - Port Elizabeth Oslo Toowoomba Port Moresby Africa - Zimbabwe

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8. As of January 8, 2019. Movement.org, accessed January 12, 2019, <https://movementday.com/events>.

Table 2. Movement Day Expressions (outside of New York City) continued.

<b>Began 2017:</b>	<b>Began 2018:</b>	<b>Began 2019:</b>
		Palm Beach Philadelphia Southern Balkans Chennai Virginia Cities Kolkata, India

<b>City</b>	<b>Date in 2020<sup>9</sup></b>
Dallas Fort-Worth	2/2020
Mumbai	2/2020
Charlotte	3/2020
Dubai	3/2020
Perth	5/2020 (2 day gathering)
New Zealand	5/2020 (2 day gathering)
Hong Kong	5/2020
Movement Day X	9/22-24/2020
Oslo	10/2020
Toowoomba	10/2020
Port Moresby	10/2020
Palm Beach	11/2020
Southern Balkans	11/2020
Philadelphia	11/2020
Chennai	11/2020
Virginia Cities	11/2020
Kolkata	11/2020
Tucson	1/25/20
Manilla	5/1/20
Australia (Melbourne)	5/8-9/2020
Teesside	5/15-17/2020
Coimbatore	8/2020

9. 2020 information provided in an email by MOVEMENT.ORG.

Table 2. Movement Day Expressions (outside of New York City) continued.

Indonesia	9/8-10/2019
Santa Clarita	10/ 2-3/2020
Africa - Nigeria	10/2020
Angola	2020
Cameroon	2020
Côte d'Ivoire	2020
Ethiopia	2020
Jakarta	6/2020
Liverpool	2020
Manchester	2020
Sunderland	2020
West Michigan	2020
Bangalore	2020
Cochin	2020

On Movement Day's website, the leading tagline reads, "Challenging, inspiring, and catalyzing the advancement of the gospel movement. Welcome to Movement Day."<sup>10</sup> Movement Day is described by its organizers as a potential catalyst for the advancement of gospel movements in cities. This is a powerful claim that bears examination. How can a one-day (or even three-day) conference catalyze a gospel movement? Are there particular variables that need to be in place in order for gospel movement to be catalyzed using a Conference? Movement Day is approaching its tenth year. Are we able to measure or identify tangible signs or markers of gospel movement in the cities where Movement Day has been held (particularly in New York City)? What are the best practices when organizing such a conference to produce a gospel movement outcome in a city?

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10. Movement Day, "Home Page," Accessed January 7, 2019, <https://movementday.com>.

## The Setting: Boston

Boston is the capital of the commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the most populous city in New England. Boston, established in 1630 by puritan settlers from England (led by John Winthrop), is one of the oldest cities in the United States of America. The city of Boston proper is the 21<sup>st</sup> most populous city in the United States, with an estimated population of 685 thousand in 2017.<sup>11</sup> Boston is the center of a larger metropolitan area known as Greater Boston or Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH<sup>12</sup>, which is the tenth largest metropolitan statistical area (MSA) in the United States with an estimated total population of 4.8 million people.<sup>13 14</sup>

### Boston's Demographics

The city of Boston is comparatively younger than the rest of Greater Boston, as well as the United States as a whole (see table 3), and more diverse (see table 4). In 2017, 39.3% of the population of Boston was between the ages of 18-34 compared to 23.3% for the United States as a whole. The city of Boston claims "the highest concentration of young adults of any of the

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11. "Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Incorporated Places of 50,000 or More, Ranked by July 1, 2017 Population: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2017", United States Census Bureau, Accessed January 12, 2019, <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk>.

12. This thesis-project will look at both the city of Boston and the Greater Boston MSA as its primary setting.

13. "Annual Estimates of the Resident Population: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2017 - United States - Metropolitan Statistical Area; and for Puerto Rico", United States Census Bureau, Accessed January 12, 2019, <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk>.

14. The Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH MSA as defined by the United States Office of Management and Budget, includes five counties in Massachusetts: Norfolk, Suffolk, Plymouth, Middlesex and Essex, as well as two counties in New Hampshire: Rockingham and Strafford. It should be noted that Greater Things for Greater Boston does not generally consider the two NH counties within it's setting, instead has a looser definition of Greater Boston that includes the area within the boundaries of the US 495 highway. For the purposes of this chapter and thesis-project, we will be using the USOMB definition.

25 largest cities in the country.”<sup>15</sup> In 2017, the city estimated a population of 148,337 students attending 30 institutions of higher education in the city of Boston, meaning that almost 22% of the city’s population is made up of undergraduate or graduate students.<sup>16</sup> Greater Boston (ex Boston)<sup>17</sup> demographic profile looks much more similar to the rest of the United States. See table 3 below.

Table 3. Population Percentage by Age Group for Boston, Greater Boston and the USA, 2017<sup>18</sup>

Age	Boston, MA	Greater Boston (ex Boston)	United States
0-17	15.5%	20.7%	22.6%
18-34	39.3%	22.8%	23.3%
35-49	17.9%	19.4%	19.1%
50-64	15.6%	21.2%	19.5%
65+	11.7%	15.9%	15.6%

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15. Boston City Hall, *Imagine Boston 2030: A Plan For the City of Boston*, 2018, 81.

16. “Student Housing Trends 2018-2019 Academic Year,” Office of Neighborhood Development, City of Boston, accessed July 24, 2019,  
[https://www.boston.gov/sites/default/files/boston\\_student\\_housing\\_trends\\_ay\\_18-19\\_190509.pdf](https://www.boston.gov/sites/default/files/boston_student_housing_trends_ay_18-19_190509.pdf).

17. “Greater Boston (ex Boston)” is the author’s term for the Greater Boston MSA non inclusive of the city of Boston proper. This distinction is made to highlight the urban-suburban dynamics within Greater Boston. It should be noted that Cambridge, Boston’s urban neighbor north of the Charles River, is included in the “Greater Boston (ex Boston)” designation. Cambridge shares similar characteristics to the city of Boston, but since its population is 113 thousand, its inclusion in the Greater Boston (ex Boston) area will not materially impact the narrative. Cambridge has not been grouped with Boston in this presentation to avoid excessive statistical manipulations on the part of the author.

18. “Sex by Age American Community Survey 1-year estimates,” U.S. Census Bureau (2017), accessed January 12, 2019,  
[https://censusreporter.org/data/table/?table=B01001&primary\\_geo\\_id=16000US2507000&geo\\_ids=16000US2507000,05000US25025,31000US14460,04000US25,01000US](https://censusreporter.org/data/table/?table=B01001&primary_geo_id=16000US2507000&geo_ids=16000US2507000,05000US25025,31000US14460,04000US25,01000US).

Table 4. Race and the Population of Boston and Greater Boston, 2017<sup>19</sup>

Ethnicity	Boston, MA	Greater Boston (ex Boston)	United States
White	43.9%	74.6%	60.6%
Black	23.1%	5.1%	12.3%
Native	0.2%	0.1%	0.7%
Asian	9.7%	7.6%	5.5%
Other	0.7%	0.9%	0.3%
Two+ <sup>20</sup>	1.9%	2.0%	2.4%
Hispanic	20.4%	9.7%	18.1%

As can be seen in table 4, the population of the city of Boston is now majority people of color (56.1%). In comparison, the population of the remainder of Greater Boston is predominantly White (74.6%). Race relations is one of the significant factors impacting Greater Boston's urban-suburban dynamics.

Table 5. Median Household Incomes, 2017<sup>21</sup>

Median Income	Boston, MA	Greater Boston (ex Boston)	United States
Less than \$50,000	41.0%	29.2%	42.1%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	27.0%	28.5%	34.0%
\$100,000 to \$199,000	24.0%	29.8%	20.9%
\$200,000 or more	10.9%	15.3%	6.9%
Median Income	\$66,758	\$85,691	\$60,336

19. "Hispanic or Latino Origin by Race American Community Survey 1-year estimates," U.S. Census Bureau (2017), accessed January 12, 2019,  
[https://censusreporter.org/data/table/?table=B03002&primary\\_geo\\_id=16000US2507000&geo\\_ids=16000US2507000,05000US25025,31000US14460,04000US25,01000US](https://censusreporter.org/data/table/?table=B03002&primary_geo_id=16000US2507000&geo_ids=16000US2507000,05000US25025,31000US14460,04000US25,01000US).

20. Two or more races.

21. "Household Income in the Past 12 Months (In 2017 Inflation-adjusted Dollars) American Community Survey 1-year estimates," U.S. Census Bureau (2017), accessed January 12, 2019,  
[https://censusreporter.org/data/table/?table=B19001&primary\\_geo\\_id=16000US2507000&geo\\_ids=16000US2507000,05000US25025,31000US14460,04000US25,01000US](https://censusreporter.org/data/table/?table=B19001&primary_geo_id=16000US2507000&geo_ids=16000US2507000,05000US25025,31000US14460,04000US25,01000US).

The median income of Boston is higher than the United States as a whole, but significantly lower than the rest of Greater Boston.<sup>22</sup> In Boston, 18.7% of the population is below the poverty line, compared to 9.6% for Greater Boston, and 13.4% for the United States as a whole.<sup>23</sup>

### Boston's Regional and National Influence

Greater Boston is part of a larger combined statistical area (CSA), which includes the municipalities of Manchester, NH (the largest city in New Hampshire), Providence, RI (the capital and largest city in Rhode Island), and Worcester, MA (the second largest city in New England), as well as Cape Cod in Massachusetts. Altogether, this CSA has an estimated population of 8.2 million people, making it the sixth largest CSA in the United States.<sup>24</sup>

Greater Boston is the political, economic and cultural center of this CSA as well as New England as a whole. As the capital of Massachusetts, Boston is home to the Massachusetts State House and Governor's office. Economically, Boston has particular concentrations in education, health care, finance and professional services.

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22. Note that the median income figure listed here for Greater Boston (ex-Boston) is actually the figure for Greater Boston (including Boston). The author did not have access to data to properly calculate the median household income for Greater Boston (ex Boston). It is fair to assume that the median income for Greater Boston (ex Boston) would actually be higher than this figure.

23. "Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH Metro Area," Census Reporter, accessed July 24, 2019, <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/31000US14460-boston-cambridge-newton-ma-nh-metro-area/>.

24. "2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates," US Census Bureau, accessed July 24, 2019, <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk>.

Many suburban residents of Greater Boston find their employment within the city of Boston itself. The Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA) estimated that the city of Boston was home to 718,000 jobs in 2014 (see table 5.), far higher than the residential population of Boston, and certainly higher than the adult residential population.

Table 6. City of Boston Employment Breakdown (718,000 total jobs in 2014)<sup>25</sup>

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Number of Jobs</b>
Services <sup>26</sup>	160,000
Health Care and Social Assistance	134,000
Finance and Insurance	105,000
Professional Services <sup>27</sup>	96,000
Government	77,000
Educational Services	56,000
Industrial <sup>28</sup>	39,000
Construction	17,000
Arts, Education and Recreation	16,000
Information	16,000
Other <sup>29</sup>	2,000
<b>Total Jobs</b>	<b>718,000</b>

Greater Boston is a national and world leader in the education, with over 50 colleges and universities, including seven major research universities: Boston College, Boston University, Brandeis University, Harvard University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology,

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25. Imagine Boston 2030, 72.

26. Includes Retail Trade, Administrative & Waste Services, Accommodation & Food Services, and Other Services.

27. Includes Professional & Technical Services and Management of Companies & Enterprises.

28. Includes Manufacturing, Transportation and Warehousing, and Wholesale Trade.

29. Includes Natural Resources & Mining, and Utilities.

Northeastern University and Tufts University. These universities attract many international students and faculty, making Boston a global hub for education as well.

The presence of the medical schools of Harvard University, Boston University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Tufts University in the Boston area, and their associated research hospitals, has also led Boston to becoming a global leader in health. Massachusetts General Hospital (ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in adult hospitals), Boston Children's Hospital (ranked 1<sup>st</sup> in children's hospitals), Brigham's and Woman's Hospital (ranked 20<sup>th</sup> in adult hospitals), among others, are highly ranked in the United States.<sup>30</sup> The presence of these hospitals and the many universities in the area are also the foundation for a strong biotech industry in Boston.

Finally, Greater Boston is also home to a strong entertainment industry, particularly in the area of sports. Boston is the only US city that has won a championship in each of the four major US sports since 2000, with a total of twelve championships in that period.<sup>31</sup>

### Boston Exceptionalism

Given Boston's success in the fields of education, healthcare and even sports, Boston residents have a great deal of pride in their city. This pride is accentuated by the history of Boston. As one of the oldest cities in the United States, Boston is associated with many "firsts",

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30. Rankings are for US hospitals by US News and World Report, "2018-2019 Best Hospitals", <https://health.usnews.com/best-hospitals/rankings>, accessed July 25, 2019.

31. The New England Patriots have won six Super Bowls (2002, 2004, 2005, 2015, 2017 & 2019). The Red Sox have won four World Series (2004, 2007, 2013 & 2018). The Celtics won the NBA Championship in 2008 and the Bruins won a Stanley Cup in 2011.

including the first public school (Boston Latin School, 1635), the first institute of higher education (Harvard, 1636), the first newspaper (the Boston News-Letter, 1704), the first public library (1848), the first underground metro system (1897) and the first annual marathon (1897). Historian Jason Sokol notes that Boston has a sense of pride in being different and first. He cites John F. Kennedy's farewell speech in Boston before moving to the White House as an example:

The “democratic institutions” of the Bay State “have served as beacon lights for other nations, as well as our sister states,” Kennedy declared. He invoked Pericles’s address to the Athenians, which “has long been true of this commonwealth: ‘*We do not imitate - for we are a model to others.*’” [emphasis added]<sup>32</sup>

The author has observed that this self-belief that Boston can and ought to be a beacon or a model to others, and not an imitator of others, is pervasive among Boston residents, even among those who are not originally from Boston. One of Boston’s great strengths is that it attracts intellectually and achievement-oriented people through its universities and industries. However, this can also be a barrier when it comes to adopting ideas that originate elsewhere, especially when outsiders bring those ideas.

### Religious Demographics

New England has held a reputation in recent years for being a difficult environment for the gospel.<sup>33</sup> While this reputation is not completely deserved, there are a number of

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32. Jason Sokol, *All Eyes Are Upon Us: Race and Politics from Boston to Brooklyn* (New York: Basic Books, 2014), xxi.

33. The author remembers taking an evangelism class from Dr. Richard Peace, former professor at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, who joked that a church of 150 was a “mega-church” in New England. As a

indicators, which suggest that the need for the gospel is great in comparison to the rest of the country.

The Pew Forum's most recent Religious Landscape Study (2014) surveyed over 35,000 people across the United States, of which 498 respondents were in the Boston metro area.

Table 6 below shows that Boston does have a significantly smaller evangelical population (9%) compared to the United States as a whole (25.4%), while the Catholic church is larger as a percentage of Boston's population than the rest of the country (29% vs 20%). Most significantly, one third of Boston residents identified as religious "nones" compared to 22.8% for the US as a whole.

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church-planter in 2010, the author often heard that Boston was only 2-2.5% evangelical. Part of this narrative derives from inaccurate statistical data, where surveys under-represent key groups. The most recent Religious Landscape Study by the Pew Research Center (see table 6), puts evangelical protestants at 9%. The Emmanuel Gospel Center in Boston argues that the Church in Boston has been far larger, more vital and more ethnically diverse than suggested by many national research projects. This argument will be explored further in this chapter when looking at the "Quiet Revival" in Boston.

Table 7. Religious Demographics of Boston compared to the United States (Pew Forum)<sup>34</sup>

	<b>USA</b>	<b>Boston</b>
<b>Christian</b>	<b>70.6%</b>	<b>57%</b>
Evangelical Protestant	25.4%	9%
Mainline Protestant	14.7%	13%
Historically Black Protestant	6.5%	3%
Catholic	20.8%	29%
Mormon	1.6%	< 1%
Orthodox Christian	0.5%	2%
Jehovah's Witness	0.8%	< 1%
Other Christian	0.4%	1%
<b>Non-Christian Faith</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>10%</b>
Jewish	1.9%	4%
Muslim	0.9%	1%
Buddhist	0.7%	1%
Hindu	0.7%	1%
Other World Religions	0.3%	< 1%
Other Faiths	1.5%	2%
<b>Unaffiliated (religious "nones")</b>	<b>22.8%</b>	<b>33%</b>
Atheist	3.1%	4%
Agnostic	4.0%	9%
Nothing in Particular	15.8%	20%
Don't Know	0.6%	1%

The Barna Research Group placed Boston among the top five most “Post-Christian” cities in the United States in 2019 in their most recent rankings.<sup>35 36</sup> Table 7 shows the rankings of the top 10 most post-Christian cities.

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34. “Religious Landscape Study 2014,” Pew Research Center, accessed July 24, 2019, <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/>.

35. Barna Group, “The Most Post-Christian Cities in America: 2019”, June 5, 2019, <https://www.barna.com/research/post-christian-cities-2019/>.

36. Barna surveyed 21,378 adults over a 10 year period, ending in April 2018. It ought to be noted that this 10 year span makes it difficult to measure changes in those 10 years, i.e. it is hard to say whether Boston is more or less post-Christian since the last rankings in 2017. While we ought to assess these results with caution, the rankings may be helpful as a big picture analysis.

Table 8. Barna's Top 10 Most Post-Christian Cities in America

Ranking	City	Post-Christian Population % <sup>37</sup>
1	Springfield-Holyoke, MA	66%
2	Portland-Auburn, ME	60%
3	Providence, RI-New Bedford, MA	59%
4	Burlington, VT	59%
<b>5</b>	<b>Boston, MA - Manchester, NH</b>	<b>57%</b>
6	Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY	56%
7	Hartford-New Haven, CT	56%
8	Rochester, NY	55%
9	Santa Barbara-Santa Maria-San Luis Obispo, CA	54%
10	Seattle-Tacoma, WA	54%

Eight of the top ten most post-Christian cities in the United States are located in the North East, and six of the top seven are located in New England. As a point of reference, the least post-Christian city in Barna's rankings was Charleston-Huntington, WV at 32%.

In 2017, the Barna group also released the results of a survey where 76,505 adults interviewed were interviewed over a 10-year span, looking at "Bible-mindedness".<sup>38</sup> Out of 100 cities ranked, Boston, MA; Manchester, NH was ranked 99<sup>th</sup> out of 100 with only 11% of those surveyed reporting having read the Bible within the past seven days and also agreeing strongly in the accuracy of the Bible. Albany/Schenectady/Troy, NY was ranked last with 10%. The most

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37. To qualify as "post-Christian", individuals had to meet nine or more of the following 16 criteria: Do not believe in God; Identify as atheist or agnostic; Disagree that faith is important in their lives; Have not prayed to God (in the last week); Have never made a commitment to Jesus; Disagree that the Bible is accurate; Have not donated any money to a church (in the last year); Have not attended a Christian church (in the last six months); Agree that Jesus committed sins; Do not feel a responsibility to "share their faith"; Have not read the Bible (in the last week); Have not volunteered at church (in the last week); Have not attended Sunday School (in the last week); Have not attended religious small group (in the last week); Bible engagement scale: low (have not read the Bible in the past week and disagree strongly or somewhat that the Bible is accurate); Not Born Again.

38. Barna Group, "American's Most Bible-Minded Cities," June 22, 2017, <https://www.barna.com/research/2017-bible-minded-cities/>.

Bible-minded city in this ranking was Chattanooga, TN at 50% of respondents being considered Bible-minded.

One more potential indicator of the spiritual climate in Boston is the current Opioid epidemic. Opioid-related deaths might be used as a statistical proxy indicator for hopelessness. While the number of opioid-related deaths has quintupled in the United States between 2000 and 2016, the opioid-related death rate in Massachusetts is more than twice the national average.<sup>39</sup> All six New England states have higher opioid-related deaths than the national average. New Hampshire and Massachusetts rank first and third in opioid-related deaths.<sup>40</sup>

### **Boston and City Gospel Movements**

Boston is no stranger to gospel movements. From its beginnings, Boston has been at or near the epicenter of a series of revival movements. Like waves coming to shore, revival movements have swept through Boston generation after generation. In fact, it might be said that city gospel movement was at the heart of Boston's very origins. Governor John Winthrop famously wrote in 1630 while on the *Arbella* during his passage to the colonies, his vision or hope that the settlement would be "a City upon a Hill".<sup>41</sup> In "A Model for Christian Unity", Winthrop explained that "the Massachusetts colonists had a special vocation to love and support one another and to obey the Lord's commandments as they followed His injunction to

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39. "Opioid Addiction Is a National Crisis. And It's Twice as Bad in Massachusetts", Boston Indicators, accessed August 5, 2019, <https://www.bostonindicators.org/reports/report-website-pages/opioids-2018#Regional>.

40. West Virginia is second.

41. Matt 5:14. This passage on salt and light from the Sermon on the Mount will be explored in chapter 2.

build “a City upon a Hill.” Should they serve the Lord faithfully, He would bless their efforts; should they deal falsely, He would destroy their plantation.”<sup>42</sup> The puritan settlers came to New England with a vision of building the kingdom of God upon earth. One might say that the settlement of Boston was a literal experiment in gospel movement.

For the remainder of this section, we will examine some of the revivals and gospel movements in Boston’s history.<sup>43</sup>

### First Great Awakening

The First Great Awakening had its epicenter in Northampton about 100 miles away from Boston (1734-35). Boston observed with interest from afar, and in 1738, Jonathan Edwards’s report (entitled “A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God”) on the Northampton Revival was published and read in Boston. This report laid the foundation for the revival in 1740. Mark Noll writes, “It was Edward’s narrative of revival more than the theology he himself presented as its foundation that most fired the evangelical imagination.”<sup>44</sup> In 1738, George Whitefield, a well-known preacher and best-selling author was invited to visit Boston by various clergy.

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42. Richard S. Dunn and Laetitia Yeandle, *The Journal of John Winthrop, 1630-1649* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1996), xi

43. For this section, the author has relied heavily upon Rudy Mitchell’s excellent article on the history of Revivals in Boston, c.f. Rudy Mitchell, "History of Revivalism in Boston," in *New England's Book of Acts*, ed. Brian Corcoran, Rudy Mitchell, and Steve Daman (Boston: Emmanuel Gospel Center, 2007).

44. Mark Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys* (Downers Grove , IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), p91.

George Whitefield began a whirlwind preaching tour of Boston (and surrounding areas) on the evening of September 18, 1740, culminating with a sermon to 23,000 people on the Boston Commons.<sup>45</sup> Over the course of approximately two weeks, Whitefield preached evangelistic messages, emphasizing the Reformed teaching of justification by faith and the necessity of regeneration by the Spirit, to growing audiences at 15 different Boston area churches and on the Boston Commons.<sup>46</sup>

Rudy Mitchell writes on the impact of this revival,

Results of the revival included an increased reading of religious books, increased demand for church meetings, home meetings, widespread demand for pastoral counsel, increased church membership, and a renewal among pastors themselves. The churches had to add new weeknight meetings for teaching because there was such a demand for religious instruction. Small groups also sprang up in a great many private homes. These private societies for religious exercises increased to a greater number than ever before, until there were thirty groups... [One preacher noted,] "The Rev. Cooper was wont to say, that more came to him in one week in deep concern for their souls, than in the whole twenty-four years of preceding ministry. I can also say the same as to the numbers who repaired to me. Mr. Cooper had about 600 persons in three months; and Mr. Webb has had in the same space above a thousand." These and other visible signs showed that the city had been transformed by the Awakening.<sup>47</sup>

#### The Revivals of 1823-24 and 1836-27 (Second Great Awakening)

The Revivals of 1823-24 and 1836-27 were part of the northern development of the Second Great Awakening. This Revival was noted for sparking church planting in Boston (see table 9 below).

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45. Mitchell notes that the population of Boston in 1740 was 17,000 people.

46. Mitchell, 14.

47. Mitchell, 18.

Table 9. Church planting between 1808 and 1842.<sup>48</sup>

Church Group	No. of churches in 1808	No. of churches in 1842	No. of total members in 1842
Congregational Trinitarian	1	14	5,000
Baptist	3	9	4,000
Episcopalian	2	6	1,300
Methodist	2	9	2,613
Other	0	7	1,116
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>14,029</b>

Before the 1823-1824 Revival, Congregational pastors had met together to pray for revival at their 1822 annual convention. Later, they joined together with the Baptists for a one day united prayer meeting (January 1823). That same month, three women at Park Street Church came under “deep conviction”. This was considered the start of the 1823-1824 Revival. Soon men and women were meeting in homes for prayer and confession. The three primary congregational churches held special weekly prayer meetings, with 250 people attending at Park Street Church and 100 people gathering to pray at Old South. Membership at the churches grew, with many conversions. In 1823, Park Street Church added 97 new members by profession of faith, growing by 34 percent in one year.<sup>49</sup>

In April 1823, the Boston leaders invited Rev. Lyman Beecher from Litchfield, Connecticut, who had experience in revival preaching, to guest preach and later to the pastorate of newly formed Hanover Street Church (started by Park Street Church, Old South Church and Union Church). Beecher would be an important figure in these Revivals.

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48. Mitchell, 19.

49. Mitchell, 19.

The Revivals were characterized by collaboration between the congregational churches whose pastors agreed to preach in one another's pulpits as well as combined prayer meetings. During the first year of Beecher's ministry at Hanover Street Church (1826), more than 150 conversions had taken place. Beecher wrote to his son Edward,

As to the importance of the stand in Boston...I have never stood in such a place before, and do not believe there is, all things considered, such another, perhaps, on earth. It is here that New England is to be regenerated, the enemy driven out of the temple they have usurped and polluted, the college to be rescued, the public sentiment to be revolutionized and restored to evangelical tone. And all this with reference to the resurrection of New England to an undivided and renovated effort for the extension of religion and moral influence throughout the land and through the world.<sup>50</sup>

#### The Revival of 1841-1842 (Finney and others)

The Revival of 1841-1842 was a localized Boston affair (in comparison to the other revivals) and "produced a remarkable amount of church growth in a large percentage of Boston's churches."<sup>51</sup> This Revival was marked in particular by an awakened spirit of prayer among Boston's churches.

Three evangelists, Charles Finney, Edward Kirk and Jacob Knapp, were influential. In October 1841, Charles Finney was invited to preach for two months in Marlboro. Edward Kirk preached three series of revival messages at Park Street Church and preached at three services a day to overflowing crowds. Prayer meetings were held before and after each of these services. One hundred and one new members were added to Park Street Church. Afterwards, a

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50. Mitchell, 20, quoting Vincent Harding, *A Certain Magnificence: Lyman Beecher and the Transformation of American Protestantism, 1775-1863* (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Publishing, 1991), 173. It is interesting to note that even Beecher (from Connecticut) had a sense of Boston's exceptionalism.

51. Mitchell, 20.

number of evangelicals helped organize Mount Vernon Congregational Church and called Kirk to be the founding pastor in 1842.

Elder Jacob Knapp preached at Baptist churches from December 1841 to March 18, 1842. Dressed in humble fashion, his preaching style was compared to John the Baptist. He spoke out powerfully against false teaching and the liquor trade. His style and content led to the formation of opposition mobs who were determined to club him. But through prayer, support from other pastors and the Mayor, the tide of opposition broke. Some of the mob were convicted of their sins and inquired as to salvation. Knapp was particularly concerned that churches welcomed the poor and neglected, and “among the converts [were]...persons from every class and of every description of moral character.”<sup>52</sup>

Mitchell writes, “As a result of this revival, over 4000 new members were added to the forty-five orthodox churches in Boston in a single year. Seldom, if ever, have so many churches received such a large proportionate increase in their memberships.... The Spirit of God was truly moving throughout the city during this period, using a variety of revivalists, pastors and lay people to build up his church.”<sup>53</sup>

#### Prayer Revival (Businessmen’s Noon Prayer) 1857-58

In 1857-58, the Prayer Revival that began with businessmen in New York swept across the nation, including Boston, but even before the Prayer Revival reached Boston in full force,

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52. Mitchell, 22, quoting Jacob Knapp, *Autobiography of Jacob Knapp*, (New York: Sheldon and Company, 1868), 125.

53. Mitchell, 22.

there were elements of revival present. The Boston YMCA began a series of Sunday evening outreach meetings under a great tent to reach the thousands of young men who ordinarily gathered on Sundays at the Boston Commons to great success, as thousands attended. Charles Finney also laid the some of groundwork for the revival as he preached at Park Street Church in the winter of 1856-1857.

Charles Finney's contribution notwithstanding, the Prayer Revival in Boston (as elsewhere) was led largely by laypersons. In December 1856, Elisabeth Finney held daily prayer meetings for women at Park Street Church, which were filled to overflowing. In March 1858, the "Businessmen's" noon prayer meeting began at Old South Church. These meetings were so popular that Old South Church proved too small, and so other daily prayer meetings were established throughout the city. Mitchell writes, "wherever there was a prayer meeting, the place would be full."<sup>54</sup>. Finney observed,

There was such a general confidence in the prevalence of prayer, that the people very extensively seemed to prefer meetings of prayer to meetings for preaching. The general impression seemed to be, 'We have had instruction until we are hardened; it is time to pray.' The answers to prayer were constant, and so striking as to arrest the attention of the people generally throughout the land. It was evident that in answer to prayer the windows of heaven were opened and the Spirit of God poured out like a flood.<sup>55</sup>

#### Dwight L. Moody Revival Meetings 1877

Dwight Moody had accepted Christ in Boston in his younger days (~1854) before moving to Chicago, and eventually becoming an evangelist. Moody (and his revivalist partner

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54. Mitchell, 23.

55. Mitchell, 23.

Ira Sankey) were invited back to Boston in 1877 by the Boston YMCA (along with Boston churches). The Boston YMCA would become the campaign headquarters for the duration of the three-month campaign. A 6000 seat Tabernacle was constructed for the campaign. Laurence Doggett (the fourth President of the International YMCA College and author of *The History of the Young Men's Christian Association*) writes, "It is estimated that often seven thousand people were crowded into this building. For three months three services daily, except on Saturday and Monday, were conducted by the evangelists. The revival grew to such proportions that other auditoriums were brought into contemporary use... In March, a Christian convention, lasting three days, to which delegates from all New England were invited, was held. This resulted in revivals throughout the six states."<sup>56</sup>

Mitchell writes,

By almost every angle of vision, Boston was another great success. Hundreds of thousands attended the meetings, thousands made commitments of faith in Christ, and many churches gained new members. One of the remarkable success stories came to A.J. Gordon's church. Moody had pushed the pastors and lay leaders to look to the hurting masses. He especially urged them to reach out to alcoholics, prostitutes, the poor, and dispossessed children. Thirty alcoholics who were rescued by Moody's zealous program were baptized and became members of Gordon's city church. Nearly twenty years later, twenty-eight of these ex-drunkards were still on the wagon and they were loyal disciples and faithful churchmen.<sup>57</sup>

One notable achievement of Moody's Revival was how it impacted lay ministry in Boston. Most remarkably, Moody encouraged a well-organized, cooperative effort by 90 churches to do house-to-house visits, particularly among the poor, which mobilized two

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56. Mitchell, 24, citing L.L. Doggett, *History of the Boston Young Men's Christian Association* (Boston: Boston Young Men's Christian Association, 1901), 27.

57. Mitchell, 24.

thousand people to cover 65,000 of Boston's 70,000 families.<sup>58</sup> To train these lay workers (and especially women who Moody felt could be particularly effective in ministering to mothers and children), Moody established two training schools at Northfield, Massachusetts.<sup>59</sup> Apart from noon-time prayer meetings at the Tabernacle, industry specific prayer meetings were also established, for "men in the dry-goods business, for men in the furniture trade, for men in the market, for men in the fish-trade, for newspaper men, for all classes in the city."<sup>60</sup>

#### Billy Sunday Revival 1916-1917

Billy Sunday was a former professional baseball player turned evangelist and in 1916, Billy Sunday was at the height of his popularity. Mitchell writes, "In our time it is hard to imagine the excitement and anticipation generated in the population of greater Boston by the visit of Billy Sunday in the late fall of 1916. Preparations began in early 1915 with the help of Sunday's advance men – 1,500 ushers, 500 secretaries, 5,000 personal workers, 7,000 prayer group leaders, and 4500 choir members were recruited and trained. \$50,000 was raised to build a tabernacle on Huntington Ave which would hold 15,000-18,000 people. The city built an extra train track down Huntington Ave to handle the large crowds.

The newspapers were full of stories about Bill Sunday and the coming revival. On November 6<sup>th</sup>, 1916, the main story on page one of *The Boston Globe* was "12,000 at Dedication: Huge Throng Flows in for Tabernacle Service." The article continues,

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58. Mitchell, 24.

59. Mitchell, 24.

60. Mitchell, 25.

Twelve thousand men and women by their presence, their prayers, their singing and their chataqua salutes, dedicated yesterday afternoon the largest building ever erected on the continent for religious purposes, the \$50,000 tabernacle built on the old Huntington Avenue Ball Grounds for the greatest evangelist of modern times to preach in.<sup>61</sup>

Preparations included six weeks of prayer meetings. Well over 100,000 greater Boston Christians attended the 7,402 parlor prayer meetings leading up to the campaign. By January 16, Christians had held 48,661 home prayer meetings with an aggregate attendance of 630,828.<sup>62</sup> In addition, campaign workers visited shops, factories and stores, inviting workers to meetings. 34,000 men attended 160 meetings. Christians fasted and prayed the Thursday before the first week.

Then on Saturday, November 11, Billy Sunday leapt from a train onto the South Station platform to greet a crowd of several thousand held back by 150 policemen. He was led by a motorcade parade through Boston to the five-story townhouse where he and his team would live for the coming weeks.<sup>63</sup>

Billy Sunday's Boston campaign began with three services on Sunday, November 12, 1916. The Boston Globe reports that the crowd was 40,000-50,000, with an additional 12,000-15,000 unable to get into the tabernacle.<sup>64</sup> Over the next three months, Sunday gave 133 messages at the Tabernacle to a total cumulative attendance of 1,320,000. 64,484 people

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61. Mitchell, 25 citing, *The Boston Globe*, Nov 6, 1916, 1.

62. Mitchell, 25.

63. Mitchell, 25 citing *The Boston Globe*, 22 Jan. 1917, evening edition, 14.

64. Mitchell, 26 citing *The Boston Globe*, 13 Nov. 1916, 1.

made a decision to follow Christ. The Boston campaign had “broken every high record Billy Sunday had set up in other great cities of America [to date].”<sup>65</sup> Billy Sunday’s revival was noteworthy for the record crowds, but also for the scale and meticulousness of planning and volunteer recruitment and engagement.

### 1950 Billy Graham Revival

While the Billy Sunday Revival had been planned in detail over a two year period, the Billy Graham Revival began with a simple invitation to Graham to come and speak at an evangelistic meeting at Mechanics Hall on New Year’s Eve, 1949 (a popular convention site in Boston) and then to preach at Park Street Church for an additional ten days. Dr. Harold Ockenga, pastor of Park Street Church, had prayed for and preached about revival for fourteen years. He had organized evangelistic meetings and invited well known speakers in the past, but the prayed-for revival had not yet come.

Billy Graham came to Boston on the heels of a very successful and nationally publicized Los Angeles campaign, and so there was considerable interest in his coming, despite the general lack of publicity for the event. Organizers were surprised by the subsequent crowds (sparked in part by growing media interest in the event) and scrambled for large spaces while planning to double the length of the campaign. The Boston Garden<sup>66</sup> was made available on January 16<sup>th</sup>, which drew a crowd of 16,000 inside, 2,500 people in the lobby and 10,000 more

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65. Mitchell, 27 citing *The Boston Globe*, 22 Jan. 1917, 5 and *The Boston Globe*, 21 Jan. 1917, 1.

66. The previous venue for the Boston Celtics and Boston Bruins.

in the streets outside. 1,200 to 1,500 people made decisions to turn to Jesus that day.

Venues could not be found for dates past January 16<sup>th</sup>, and so Graham and the campaign leaders reluctantly decided to close the Boston campaign. However, they agreed to organize a second phase beginning March 28<sup>th</sup>, which would spread the revival to all six New England states. This second campaign was much better planned and organized than the first, with Ockenga providing leadership with the help of the Evangelistic Association of New England and the New England Fellowship of Evangelicals. Pastors and leaders had more time to prepare for overflow crowds and also recruited people both in New England and around the country to pray for the revival.

The twenty-day itinerary of the second campaign covered fifteen cities. National and local media gave the meetings widespread publicity, with newspapers sending fifteen to twenty reporters everywhere Graham went. No less than 476 newspaper articles were printed about the meetings.<sup>67</sup> Attendance at the indoor meetings of the second phase was conservatively estimated at 115,000 and more than 6,000 people signed confessions of faith on decision cards. The campaign culminated with Graham returning to Boston for four days (April 19-22) where he spoke at the Boston Garden and a final Sunday afternoon rally on the Boston Common. The Sunday began with rain, but Graham's team prayed that the rain would stop. In the afternoon, as the first hymn was sung, the sun came out on the crowd of 45,000-75,000.<sup>68</sup> The Boston Globe called it "the greatest revival meeting New England has seen in the present

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67. Mitchell, 29.

68. Mitchell, 29.

generation.”<sup>69</sup>

Billy Graham would return to Boston in 1964 to speak at Harvard University and 1982 as part of a three month New England campaign hitting seven cities. On May 30, 1982, Graham addressed a crowd of 25,000 at Boston University. He told the crowd, “This is a climactic moment in this decade. We’ve already seen a tremendous move of the spirit of God in New England...the beginning of what may be a great spiritual awakening. If it starts here in New England, it may spread across America.”<sup>70</sup> However, sadly the 1982 campaign did not launch another great spiritual awakening in New England, at least in the way Billy Graham may have envisioned.

#### Quiet Revival 1965 to Present

Instead, the Emmanuel Gospel Center (EGC) has identified what they have termed “the Quiet Revival” which is captured in the unprecedented rate of church planting in Boston since 1965 (see table 9). Even as the overall population of Boston declined due to economic decline and white flight to the suburbs, the number of churches grew at an unprecedented rate.

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69. Globe Staff, “When Billy Graham Came to Boston,” *The Boston Globe*, 21 Feb. 2018, <https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2018/02/21/when-billy-graham-came-boston/wQROpMal4J8hezNI6MN5UO/story.html>.

70. “When Billy Graham Came to Boston,” *The Boston Globe*, 21 Feb. 2018.

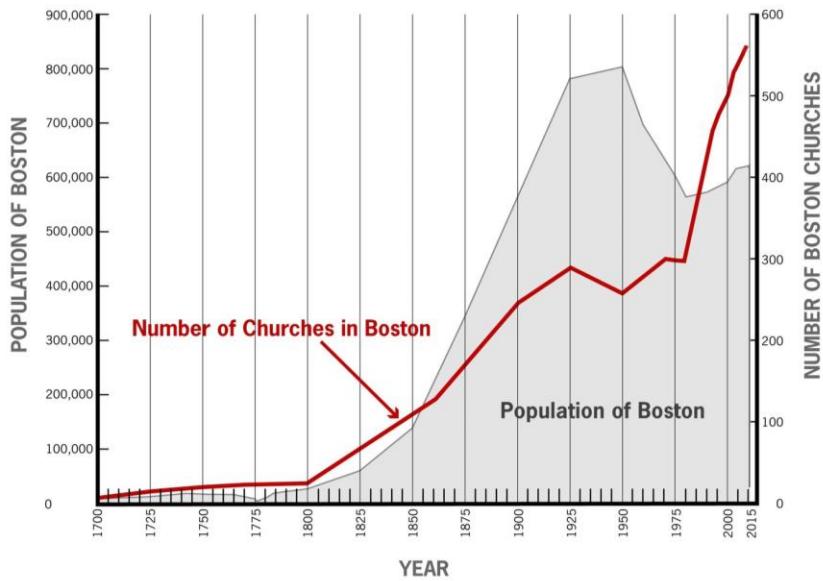


Figure 1. Comparative Growth of Boston's Churches and Population, 1700-2015<sup>71</sup>

The Quiet Revival can be seen as the Boston manifestation of the rise of Pentecostal Christianity in the Global South as immigrants from Latin America, Brazil, the Caribbean, Asia and Africa, brought their faith and planted churches in Boston, accompanied by the growth of Christianity among African-Americans and some Euro-Americans in Boston. This revival has lasted four decades without the investment of significant resources, human planning or the involvement of well-known revivalists or evangelists.<sup>72</sup> The growth has been aided by educational programs such as the Center For Urban Ministerial Education, the urban Boston extension of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

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71. Rudy Mitchell, "The Changing Shape of Boston's Church Community," in *New England's Book of Acts*, ed. Brian Corcoran, Rudy Mitchell, and Steve Daman (Boston: Emmanuel Gospel Center, 2007), 8.

72. Doug Hall and Judy Hall, "Two Secrets of the Quiet Revival," in *New England's Book of Acts*, ed. Brian Corcoran, Rudy Mitchell, and Steve Daman (Boston: Emmanuel Gospel Center, 2007), 33.

### Boston TenPoint Coalition and the “Boston Miracle”

While not a Revival movement in the traditional sense, the Boston Miracle is noteworthy as the workings out of the gospel in the city of Boston. The Boston Miracle refers to a period in the late 1990s when Boston experienced an unprecedented decline in youth violence, including over two years with zero teenage homicide victims. The Boston TenPoint Coalition was formed in 1992 when a group of urban pastors was galvanized into action by violence erupting at a funeral for a murdered teen at Morning Star Baptist Church<sup>73</sup>. Collaborating with Boston Police and local academics, these urban pastors developed a ten-point plan to address youth violence. Together, these parties executed “Operation Ceasefire” which has since been adopted in other US cities. The TenPoint Coalition is noteworthy in the level of collaboration between pastors and other interested parties in Boston to address a specific social issue.

### Observed Principles of Boston’s Revivals

As David Currie notes, in every generation, Christians must discern for themselves what God is doing. Methods which were part of previous revivals and gospel movements may not have the same impact as the context changes. Since 1723, the culture and demographics of Boston have dramatically changed, and is now in a post-Christian (Constantinian) context. As such, Christians in Boston must today discern what God is doing in this generation.

Yet, we are able to observe principles that may be universal across contexts and time.

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73. Morning Star Baptist Church is one of the largest (Black) churches in Boston.

While evangelistic campaigns may not have the same effectiveness/anointing as in the past, we can look for the commonalities across these revivals. Mitchell summarizes his article in this way,

In all these times of revival, prayer played an important role. While persistent prayer for revival was clearly evident, God often did not bring revival until several years later. In some revivals, church planting was an important result or ingredient. Generally, God worked through a specific person or persons who were filled with Spirit and power and provided a focus for attracting the public's attention. Quite often God used publicity from newspapers and other printed sources to prepare the way in arousing the interest of the general public. Although well-known personalities were often involved, the efforts of local pastors and countless laymen and laywomen were always crucial. God seemed to often use people who, in the world's eyes, were not the most experienced or the most well-educated. These speakers were totally dedicated to God, and their weaknesses perhaps enabled the power of God to shine even more brightly. They were not known for brilliant, and uniquely new ideas, but for preaching the basic gospel with simplicity, clarity and power.<sup>74</sup>

Adding to Mitchell's conclusions, we can make observations about the outcomes of these Revivals as well some of the common practices and principles that undergirded these Revivals. In terms of gospel movement outcomes, we can see that the Revivals featured conversions that led to church growth and often church planting. Sometimes, social change occurred as well. In terms of principles, we can observe that with the exception of the 1842 Revival, most of these Revivals involved outsiders coming to Boston (including the most recent Quiet Revival), whether it be in the form of evangelists or immigrants. Collaboration between the local churches, church leaders and other parties, both in the non-profit sector (e.g. the Boston YMCA) and government sector was often critical to give organization and resources to the Revival. Where this was lacking, for example, the first Billy Graham campaign, the Revival

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74. Mitchell, 29

experienced a hitch. Finally, while collaboration was important, the leadership of key churches and pastors was often instrumental. Over and over, we can see the leadership of churches such as Park Street Church or the Boston YMCA in spearheading the movement.

### The Continued need for Gospel Movement

While the Quiet Revival has seen an unprecedented rate of new churches planted in Boston, there continue to be systemic issues (or “stubborn realities”) that the Church can partner together to address. These include a long history of racial tensions that have contributed to urban-suburban divides, as well as educational, health and economic inequities between different racial segments.

### A Racial Divide

Boston has a complicated history when it comes to race-relations. On the one hand, Boston was a “hotbed for noted abolitionists and an important stop on the Underground Railroad”.<sup>75</sup> The first chapter of the NAACP was established in Boston. Martin Luther King Jr. attended graduate school in Boston and Malcolm X lived in Boston as a young adult. Boston was key to helping elect Governor Deval Patrick as the first re-elected black governor, as well the first black US senator in Republican Edward Brooke in 1966.

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<sup>75</sup>Russell Contreras, "NAACP branch confronts Hub's poor image among blacks". Associated Press, January 16, 2011.  
[http://archive.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/articles/2011/01/16/naACP\\_branch\\_confronts\\_hubs\\_poor\\_image\\_among\\_blacks/](http://archive.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/articles/2011/01/16/naACP_branch_confronts_hubs_poor_image_among_blacks/)

At the same time, Boston has a negative reputation among African Americans. Michael Curry, President of Boston's NAACP (2011-2016) reflects, "Boston is definitely a city that has two sides. Maybe we should own that." The other side of Boston's racial history includes the Busing Riots of 1974 when white protests against forced desegregation led to outbreaks of violence and white flight to the suburbs. In the first five years of desegregation, the parents of 30,000 children, took their students out of the Boston Public school system and left Boston, either to suburbs or to private schools.<sup>76</sup> In 1974, there were 86,000 students enrolled in Boston public schools, more than half white. In 2019, there are 54,000 students, of whom only 14% are white.<sup>77</sup> Other images of racism include the Boston Red Sox who were the last of the 16 Major League teams to sign a black player, and the largely white Boston Celtics team of the 1980s, when most NBA teams had several black players.<sup>78</sup>

More tangibly, there are clear systemic equity issues that highlight the racial divide. The Federal Reserve Bank of Boston in 2015, reported that the median net worth of non-immigrant African American households in Boston was \$8, the lowest in a five-city study of wealth disparities. In contrast, the median net worth for white households in the Boston area is \$247,500.<sup>79</sup>

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76. Bruce Gellerman, "Busing left deep scars on Boston, it's students". *WBUR*, September 5, 2014, <https://www.wbur.org/news/2014/09/05/boston-busing-effects>.

77. "BPS at a glance 2019," Boston Public Schools, accessed October 16, 2019, [https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/cms/lib/MA01906464/Centricity/Domain/187/BPS%20at%20a%20Glance%2019\\_final.pdf](https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/cms/lib/MA01906464/Centricity/Domain/187/BPS%20at%20a%20Glance%2019_final.pdf).

78. Contreras, "NAACP."

79. Ana Patricia Munoz et al, "The Color of Wealth in Boston," Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, March 25, 2015. <https://www.bostonfed.org/publications/one-time-pubs/color-of-wealth.aspx>.

These inequities are also revealed in health indicators. For example, in the Back Bay (a wealthy area of Boston), the average person lives to the age of 92. In Roxbury (a neighborhood where most of the residents are people of color), located a few miles away from the Back Bay, the average lifespan is just under 59 years, making for a 33 year difference in life expectancy, despite the quality of nearby hospitals.<sup>80</sup>

In the sphere of education, there is a persistent achievement gap in the academic performance of different ethnic groups. The Boston Herald cites MCAS<sup>81</sup> scores revealing that only 24% of black and 26% of Hispanic students in grades 3 through 8 scored above grade-level proficiency in MCAS reading in 2018 compared to 63% of white and 62% of Asian students.<sup>82</sup> At the high school level (10<sup>th</sup> grade level), 93% of Asian and 85% of white sophomores scored proficient or advanced in math, compared to 57% of black and 58% of Hispanic students. More than 40% of both black and Hispanic sophomores are in the “needs improvement” or “failing” categories for math.<sup>83</sup>

### **The Urban-Suburban Divide**

The racial divisions in Boston have also contributed to an urban-suburban divide. White flight from the city into the suburbs has led to Boston’s population becoming majority

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80. Sandro Galea, “Health and the City,” *BU School of Public Health*, March 8, 2015. <http://www.bu.edu/sph/2015/03/08/health-and-the-city/>.

81. Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) is Massachusetts’ state-wide testing system, given to students in grades 3-8 and also grade 10 (sophomores).

82. Rick Sobey, “Boston schools achievement gap remains wide along racial lines – a ‘troubling sign’”, *Boston Herald*, May 8, 2019. <https://www.bostonherald.com/2019/05/07/boston-schools-achievement-gap-remains-wide-along-racial-lines-a-troubling-sign/>.

83. Sobey, “Boston schools.”

people of color in contrast to the suburbs which remain majority white (see section on Boston's demographics above), contributing also to growing economic disparities.

Relations between majority white churches in the suburbs and majority people of color churches in Boston have also been strained, due to decades of mistrust. According to Mac Pier, "the greatest need in any city is not money, space or programs but trust between diverse people of faith".<sup>84</sup> This appears to be true for Boston as there needs to be greater trust built between churches and in particular churches in the city and churches in the suburbs. One dynamic that caused pain in the past was the tendency of white suburban churches to see the city of Boston as a place that needed to be fixed. As one leader described, "Too often, urban people of color are presented solutions by suburban white people."<sup>85</sup> One of the reasons GTGB was formed was to address this very issue. The primary founders were leaders from both urban and suburban contexts. In light of past tensions, suburban leaders are now more careful to defer to urban leaders. While wise, this can also presents a form of inertia as suburban leaders will wait upon urban leaders to take the initiative.

### **Assumptions**

There are a number of assumptions underlying this thesis-project, many of which the author may not be aware of. The most important assumption is that "city gospel movement" is a concept that can be defined and researched, and furthermore, that city gospel movements

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84. Pier, 32.

85. Private conversation with a Boston leader.

are desirable. Furthermore, as will be made clearer in chapter two, the author assumes that in God's sovereignty, he chooses to invite his people to join in his work of redemption. The author assumes that cities are locales that need God's redemption and Christians are invited to join in that work, even if full redemption does not come in their lifetime.

Some further assumptions include the assumption that the growth of Movement Day in terms of attendees in New York City on a year-on-year basis as well as the adoption of Movement Day by various global cities suggests that there is some kind of Spirit inspired movement happening that is worthy of study. Moreover, it will be assumed that city gospel movements have a human component that can be studied, beyond the work of God. In other words, there is the assumption that God works through human agents, and that there are best practices that can be studied and implemented in a contextualized manner for other contexts. In particular, the author holds the assumption that lessons can be learned from the experience of leaders from cities that are not Boston, that can be contextualized to Boston.

As a born and raised urbanite (born in Seoul and raised in Hong Kong), the author assumes that cities are critically important contexts for ministry. However, since many may not share this assumption, chapter 2 will explore the importance of the city as a critical locale for a gospel movement.

### **Parameters of this Thesis-Project**

This thesis-project will focus upon gospel movements for *cities* as the appropriate scale or scope for study, as opposed to gospel movements in general, for three primary reasons. First, Boston is an epicenter city in the New England region and with global influence

that is greater than the sum of its statistical parts. When considering Movement Day's potential impact for *Boston*, the appropriate scale of study would seem to be at the city level. As such, the participants of the research study will be chosen from leaders who have organized Movement Day conferences for cities. Second, while cities have always been important ministry contexts, it can be argued that the importance of cities has increased even since the birth of the church in Jerusalem, growing from 1% to over 55% today. Over 80% of the population in the United States now live in cities.<sup>86</sup> Cities are now the primary ministry context for the majority of Americans. Third, Christianity often biblically impacts cities, which then impact regions and nations.

For the purposes of this thesis-project, the scope of the "city" we are considering is "Greater Boston" (i.e. Boston and its surrounding suburbs) as well the particular context of the city of Boston proper.

Finally, while this thesis-project will explore city gospel movements in general, the project will focus upon Movement Day in particular as the potential lever for city gospel movement. An exploration of other conferences or methodologies are outside of the scope of this thesis-project.

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86. Hannah Ritchie and Max Roser, "Urbanization," OurWorldInData.org, Accessed January 9, 2019. <https://ourworldindata.org/urbanization>.

## CHAPTER 2

### A THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

#### Introduction

In this chapter, a theological and historical framework will be presented in order to assess Movement Day's potential effectiveness as a catalyst for city gospel movement. Specifically, this chapter will seek to answer the question, "how can a city gospel movement be catalyzed?" Subsidiary questions include: What does city gospel movement look like? How can observers know that it's happening?

The word "theology" refers primarily to the study of God, but since God is the author and creator of all things, "theology" can also be defined as asking the question: what does God think? What is God's perspective on the city? What does God want to do about the city (short answer: it starts with the gospel)? How can his people participate in his will (i.e. participate in a gospel movement)? Depending on the practitioner's answers to these questions, he/she will mean very different things by the phrase "city gospel movement". There can be no assessment of the effectiveness of Movement Day as a city gospel movement catalyst, unless there is a clear theological framework to understand what city gospel movements are.

Drawing from scripture and the history of the church<sup>1</sup>, a theological framework will be developed for conferences as a city gospel movement catalyst. Broadly, this chapter will be outlined as follows:

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1. For the sake of focus, this chapter will only examine the history of gospel movements in Boston. A broader historical examination of gospel movements is beyond the scope of this project.

1. **A Theology of Cities.** What is a city? Why is the city the unit of study rather than a broader analysis of gospel movements? What does scripture have to say about cities? A practitioner's core assumptions and presuppositions about God's view of the city will frame the practitioner's approach to the city. In this chapter, the author will argue that the same characteristics that make cities important are opportunities for the spread of the gospel and can be leveraged to benefit city gospel movement.
2. **A Theology of the Gospel.** What is the gospel? In order to catalyze a gospel movement, it is critical to know what the gospel is so that the correct desired outcomes are being targeted. A distinction will be made between the content of the gospel (the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and the inauguration of the kingdom of God) and the outcomes of the gospel (salvation, forgiveness, the advancement of God's kingdom, etc.). A movement is a gospel movement when the movement has the content of the gospel (Jesus and his kingdom) at center-place and its vision and strategy have gospel outcomes in mind.
3. **A Theology of City Gospel Movement.** The early church had clear movement-al dynamics (as seen in the Book of Acts). The gospel of the Kingdom is inherently movement-al, i.e. "the kingdom has come and is coming". What are the key characteristics of a gospel movement?
4. **A Theology of Gathering.** How do Christian gatherings act as catalysts for wider city gospel movement? This section will examine through scripture, the missional importance of unity from scripture, the significance of the Word as the seed, and the question of sufficiency: how many are needed to catalyze a gospel movement?

## A Theology of the City

### What is the City?

It is surprisingly difficult to find agreement as to the definition of a city. Scott Sunquist points out that one reason the city is difficult to define is that complexity and diversity are a part of its nature.<sup>2</sup>

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines a city as “an inhabited place of greater size, population, or importance than a town or a village”<sup>3</sup> The problems with this definition are apparent. Merriam-Webster’s definition of a city is primarily comparative, focusing on what it is not. Yes, a city is larger than a town or village, but this does not tell us what a city *is* (beyond an inhabited place). Using population size as a minimum boundary would eliminate all ancient cities from this definition. Alternatively, Tim Keller defines the Hebrew word for city, ‘*Ir*, as “any human settlement surrounded by some fortification or wall.”<sup>4</sup> The ancient Hebraic definition of a city also has limitations for the modern world. For the purposes of this thesis-project, the definition of a city must translate across history.

Harvard economist and urbanist Ed Glaeser provides a more philosophical and fundamental definition: “Cities are the absence of physical space between people and companies. They are proximity, density, closeness. They enable us to work and play together,

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2. Scott Sunquist, *Understanding Christian Mission: Participation in Suffering and Glory* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 342.

3. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/city>, accessed January 8, 2020.

4. Tim Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 135, Kindle.

and their success depends on the demand for physical connection.”<sup>5</sup> Tim Keller agrees, pointing out that “the essence of a city is not the population size but it’s density. A city is a social form in which people physically live in close proximity to one another.”<sup>6</sup> The island of Manhattan in present day New York City has a population density of 105 residents per acre. While ancient cities had much smaller populations, they housed an average of 240 residents per acre in a fortified area about five to ten acres in size.<sup>7</sup> This definition of the city gives us a better basis for considering cities throughout history.

Why would people choose to live in such close proximity to one another? Ed Glaeser writes, “On a planet with vast amounts of space (all of humanity could fit in Texas—each of us with a personal townhouse), we choose cities.”<sup>8</sup> In an increasingly flat world, people still choose to live in dense proximity together often at great cost. One reason lies in what a city is able to provide. As such, another way to define a city is what it provides: the opportunity to thrive. Glaeser writes, “In the world’s poorer places, cities are expanding enormously because urban density provides the clearest path from poverty to prosperity.”<sup>9</sup>

A pathway to prosperity is not the only opportunity a city provides. Keller argues that in the Bible, the city is first, a place of safety and stability; second, a place of diversity; and finally a

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5. Edward Glaeser, *Triumph of the City: How our Greatest Invention Makes Us Richer, Smarter, Greener, Healthier and Happier* (New York: Penguin Publishing Group, 2012), 6, Kindle.

6. Keller, *Center Church*, 135.

7. Keller, *Center Church*, 135.

8. Glaeser, *The Triumph of Cities*, 1.

9. Glaeser, *The Triumph of Cities*, 1. On page 9, Glaeser will argue that “cities don’t make people poor; they attract poor people.”

space for productivity and creativity.<sup>10</sup> Joel Kotkin's influential<sup>11</sup> definition of the city is a place that is "sacred, safe and busy"<sup>12</sup>, i.e. providing a sacred space, a safe space and a place for commerce.<sup>13</sup> Stephen Um and Justin Buzzard argue that cities are centers of power, culture and worship.<sup>14</sup> These descriptors overlap in many cases, and there will be a deeper exploration of the authors' understanding of the city later in this chapter as well as in Chapter Three's literature review.

The attractiveness of the city to new residents invites diverse people, and the diverse population makes the city more attractive to diverse people. One final way to define cities is in this way:

Cities are diverse, dense places where different types of people interact with one another. Cities are populated with people of various cultures, different worldviews, and different vocations. Cities force individuals to refine their cultural assumptions, religious beliefs, and sense of calling as they rub up against the sharp edges of the assumptions, beliefs, and expertise of other city dwellers.<sup>15</sup>

### The Increasing Importance of the City

This section will explore the global, social and biblical realities which underly the growing importance of cities to the Church's gospel mission. Specifically, cities are important

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10. Keller, *Center Church*, 136-138.

11. Kotkin's definition is the foundation for Sunquist and Um & Buzzard's understanding of a city.

12. Joel Kotkin, *The City: A Global History* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2005), xvii.

13. A deeper exploration of these characteristics and the respective authors' understanding of them will be provided in chapter three's literature review.

14. Stephen Um & Justin Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter: To God, the Culture, and the Church* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2013), 34.

15. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 16.

because people are increasingly moving into cities; cities are places of hope, innovation and influence; and finally, that cities were the center of the New Testament church's activity.

### **Increasingly People are in Cities**

Some researchers have projected that on May 23, 2007, the world's urban population outgrew its rural population,<sup>16</sup> and so, as of 2007, the majority of people who are in need of the gospel now live in urban areas. The United States has been majority urban since the early twentieth century and as of 2018, over two hundred sixty nine million Americans (or 82.3% of the total US population) live in the 3 percent of the country that is urban.<sup>17</sup> Globally, five million people move into cities every month.<sup>18</sup> In the past sixty years, the number of cities that contain more than ten million people has gone from one to twenty-three.<sup>19</sup>

Al Mohler, president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, responded to a 2010 Special Report by Financial Times titled “The Future of Cities”:

This much is clear—the cities are where the people are. In the course of less than 300 years, our world will have shifted from one in which only 3 percent of people live in cities, to one in which 80 percent are resident in urban areas. If the Christian church does not learn new modes of urban ministry, we will find ourselves on the outside looking in. The Gospel of Jesus Christ must call a new generation of committed Christians into these teeming cities. As these new numbers make clear, there really is no

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16. Eric Swanson & Sam Williams, *To Transform A City: Whole Church Whole Gospel Whole City* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 25.

17. Glaeser, *Triumph of the City*, 1.

18. With five million new urban residents every month, this would suggest that at least a thousand churches need to be planted every month, if one assumes a church per five thousand people.

19. Sunquist, *Understanding Christian Mission*, 343.

choice.<sup>20</sup>

Cities are becoming an increasingly important context for gospel mission because cities are where people increasingly are. God tells Jonah, “Should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?” (Jonah 4:11). God reveals his compassion for the city of Nineveh which is driven by the presence of a multitude of the spiritually lost. Since cities represent concentrated densities of people created in God’s image, there is a vital need and opportunity for God’s people to minister the gospel in word and deed in cities. As Keller writes, “Cities have literally more of the image of God per square inch than any other place on earth. How can we not be drawn to such masses of humanity if we care about the same things God cares about?”<sup>21</sup> Moreover the needs of the city are great. Even as Glaeser argues that urban poor are in fact wealthier than rural poor<sup>22</sup>, it remains true that as of 2010, nearly one billion people worldwide lived in slums.<sup>23</sup> Concentrations of the urban poor should command the church’s attention.

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20. Albert Mohler, “From Megacity to ‘Metacity’ – the Shape of the Future,” April 22, 2010, <https://albertmohler.com/2010/04/22/from-megacity-to-metacity-the-shape-of-the-future/>.

21. Keller, *Center Church*, 141.

22. Glaeser, *Triumph of the City*, 10.

23. Sunquist, *Understanding Christian Mission*, 344.

## Cities are Places of Hope

As described earlier, people are attracted to cities because they hope to find there an opportunity to thrive, whether educational opportunities; career opportunities; relational and social opportunities; or a place to feel safe (physically, emotionally or spiritually). This hope points to a fundamental truth: Cities are physical manifestations of worship.<sup>24</sup> From the very beginning, cities were organized around the desires, dreams and hopes of their residents. Kotkin writes,

Religious structures - temples, cathedrals, mosques, and pyramids – have long dominated the landscape and imagination of great cities. These buildings suggested that the city was also a sacred place, connected directly to divine forces controlling the world. In our own, so much more secularly oriented times, cities seek to recreate the sense of sacred place through towering commercial buildings and evocative cultural structures... “A striking landscape,” the historian Kevin Lynch suggested, “is the skeleton” in which city dwellers construct their “socially important myths.”<sup>25</sup>

The city is the bearer, organizer and priest to the hopes and dreams of its residents, who daily offer up worship to the principles and objects which give meaning to their lives. Sunquist writes, “Throughout Scripture, we see again and again that worship is the center of the city, which means that the evil of a city is false worship” whether it be human pride or avarice or careers or fame.<sup>26</sup> People are drawn to the city due to the promise of success or flourishing, but will find that these idols promise much but ultimately fail to deliver. Cities as centers of worship then are fertile soil to point to true worship.

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24. This idea of cities as places of worship will be further developed later in this chapter.

25. Kotkin, *The City*, xix.

26. Sunquist, *Understanding Christian Mission*, 348.

Moreover, among the diverse people whom the city draws will be the spiritually open, as well as the socially open. Rodney Stark argues that “social networks are the basic mechanism through which conversion takes place.”<sup>27</sup> New residents without strong social networks are more likely to be open to new spiritual communities and cities are where a preponderance of transient people looking for new social networks exist.

### **Cities are Hubs of Innovation**

Cities are also increasingly important as hubs of innovation and creativity for the world. Um & Buzzard point out that successful cities have “clustered density” and “connective diversity”. They posit that “regular, challenging face-to-face interactions with other people make us more creative, innovative, and productive,”<sup>28</sup> especially if there is density of talent (which cities often attract). Richard Florida writes, “When people – especially talented and creative ones – come together, ideas flow more freely, and as a result individual and aggregate talents increase exponentially: the end result amounts to much more than the sum of the parts.”<sup>29</sup>

The density of cities makes possible more face-to-face interactions which strengthen individual approaches and spawn new ideas.<sup>30</sup> However, density by itself is not sufficient for

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27. Rodney Stark, *Cities of God: The Real Story of How Christianity Became an Urban Movement and Conquered Rome* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006), 13.

28. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 44.

29. Richard Florida, *Who's Your City?: How the Creative Economy Is Making Where to Live the Most Important Decision of Your Life* (New York: Basic Books, 2009), 66.

30. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 45.

innovation as the decline of cities with homogenous density (e.g. Detroit) demonstrate.

Instead, clustered density plus connective diversity springs forth innovation. Cities are more often able to provide this kind of diversity.<sup>31</sup>

In contrast to settings that tend to move toward homogeneity most cities provide us opportunities to live in close proximity to a variety of people who are *unlike* us. Musicians interact with engineers. Tech developers mix with professors of American history. Scientists bump into theologians. Easterners cross paths with Westerners... the opportunity for diverse interaction is present in cities, even if city dwellers do not always take advantage of it.<sup>32</sup>

Clustered density plus connected diversity leads to innovation and increased productivity,<sup>33</sup> which is why, “Americans who live in metropolitan cities with more than a million residents are on average 50 percent more productive than Americans who live in smaller metropolitan areas.”<sup>34</sup> In fact, “there is a near perfect correlation between urbanization and prosperity across nations. On average, as the share of a country’s population that is urban rises by 10 percent, the country’s per capita output increases by 30 percent.”<sup>35</sup>

This characteristic of cities as innovation hubs and the associated inherent qualities of clustered density and connective diversity has critical implications for the church and the gospel

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31. Historian Wayne Meeks points out that rural areas are often more conservative, “the conservatism of villages [is] their central characteristic.” Wayne Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 15. The lack of clustered density and connective diversity in rural areas makes it more likely for the status quo to be kept.

32. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 46.

33. One caveat to this argument is supplied by Cultural Intelligence researcher David Livermore. Livermore argues in his book *Driven by Difference: How Great Companies Fuel Innovation Through Diversity*, that diverse teams outperform homogeneous teams in every area—productivity, employee engagement, cost savings, profitability, and innovation – as long as they have high cultural intelligence. Otherwise homogenous teams have been demonstrated to be more innovative than diverse teams with low CQ.

34. Glaeser, *Triumph of Cities*, 6.

35. Glaeser, *Triumph of Cities*, 7.

movement. Innovations *in* gospel movement are also likely to come from *Christian* clustered density and *Christian* connected diversity. When diverse Christians interact in proximity, then a great potential for innovation in mission exists, as a broader representation of Christ's body actively seeks his will.

### **Cities are Hubs of Influence**

Due to their population sizes and innovations, cities are also hubs of regional and global economic and cultural influence. For example, the City of Boston has economic and cultural influence over New England, and global influence as an exporter of education and health-related products. The Apostle Paul's strategy for evangelizing a region was to preach and plant churches in the primary cities. When Paul and Barnabas preached in the city of Antioch in Psidia, Luke writes, "The next Sabbath almost the whole city [of Antioch in Psidia] gathered to hear the word of the Lord....Upon hearing from Paul and Barnabas, [the Gentiles] began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. And the *word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region* [emphasis added]" (Acts 13:44-49)<sup>36</sup>.

Similarly, when Paul focused on teaching in Ephesus for two years, "all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 19:10). Paul taught in Ephesus, and Ephesus (specifically, the citizens and residents in Ephesus) exported his teachings to the

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36. All quotes from Scripture are from the English Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.

surrounding regions. Cities are exporters of new ideas, and people carrying new ideas. As Um & Buzzard point out,

Not only do suburbs receive culture shaped by the city, they receive *people* shaped by the city. And, though they have relocated to the suburbs, these individuals likely work in the city, are fed a cultural diet delivered to their doorstep by the city, succeed in the suburbs based on skills acquired in cities, and shape their lives and the world around them with the ideologies acquired during their formative years in the city.<sup>37 38</sup>

The “flattening of the world”<sup>39</sup> has not diminished the importance of cities as dense diverse influential spaces. Instead technology (faster communication and cheaper travel) has heightened the influence of cities, as now culture can now be more quickly exported from cities to non-urban areas as well as to other cities. A global mission no longer requires travel to a foreign land. Representatives of many nations can be reached with the gospel in one city, and a gospel movement can spread back to those nations through new disciples.

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37. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 31.

38. An example of this dynamic are the many residents of the suburbs of Greater Boston who work in the City of Boston itself, as described in chapter One. Another anecdotal example of this dynamic comes from the author’s past work with a church planting network in Vietnam. Many of the rural churches in this network had been planted by believers who had been drawn to Ho Chi Minh City as rural residents for economic reasons, subsequently became believers in the City, and then returned to their former villages and rural areas in order to share Christ and eventually plant a church. This dynamic is not merely regional or national but now also global, as representatives of many nations can occupy a single city.

39. The concept of a flat world refers to Thomas Friedman’s thesis (found in his book *The World Is Flat*) that technological advancements (particularly with fiber-optics which made global communication much cheaper and faster) meant that work could be outsourced to anywhere in the world. Based on this phenomenon, one might predict the decline of cities, since people no longer need to live in cities to be connected. However, cities have continued to grow not decline.

## **The City was *the* Center of Christian Activity in the New Testament**

To conclude this section, it can be noted that cities have been a critical context since the beginning of the Christian movement. Sociologist Rodney Stark states: "Early Christianity was primarily an urban movement. The original meaning of the word *pagan* (*paganus*) was 'rural person,' or more colloquially 'country hick.' It came to have a religious meaning because Christianity had triumphed in the cities, most of the rural people remained unconverted."<sup>40</sup> The primary context of the Book of Acts are the urban centers of the Near East and Europe. Missiologist Harvey Conn states, "It was not until the last twenty years of the third century that Christianity began to impact some important rural areas of the empire."<sup>41</sup>

### **Towards a Biblical Theology of the City**

What does God think about the city? The city has a complicated story in the Bible rejecting simplistic black-or-white labels. If the city is essentially human density, then the city should reflect both the best and worst of humanity. As described above, human density has the potential for creativity, compassion and diversity. At the same time, human density facilitates sin (it is easier to sin against others when many others are constantly present), facilitates illness (communicable diseases are more likely to spread when people are in close proximity to one another), and exposes inequities (poverty is more visible in the city because it is more densely gathered).

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40. Stark, *Cities of God*, 2.

41. Harvie Conn, "The Kingdom of God and the City of Man," in *Discipling the City: A Comprehensive Approach to Urban Mission*, ed. Roger S. Greenway, 2nd Ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 249.

In turn, the biblical record requires a nuanced view of the city, including both negative and positive aspects of the city. As many pastors have summarized, “the Bible begins in a garden and ends in a city.” On the one hand, the city represents the culmination of God’s plan and grace. At the same time, the city represents human pride and evil. Augustine argued that the story of the city in scripture is a story of two cities: the city of God and the city of man, symbolized by Jerusalem and Babylon. The first city in the Bible was built by Cain, the first murderer but is also a place that produces cultural innovations. Babel (the forerunner to Babylon) displays the height of human ambition apart from God. The story of Lot’s wife serves as warning for those who are unable to part ways with the evils of the city. Abram is called out of the city to wander pastorally in the promised land. At the same time, the people of Israel are disciplined for lacking faith during the exodus and commanded to wander in the wilderness for forty years before they are able to enter the promised land and settle into cities that they had not built.

In this section, major biblical themes will be explored, specifically the idea that the city as a place of productivity and creativity, a place of safety and a place of worship.

### **City as a Place of Productivity and Creativity**

Even before Cain builds his city in Genesis 4:17, God’s plan for the city is arguably seen earlier in Genesis 1-2 where an urban design is embedded into God’s creative plan. Before the Fall, God creates man and woman and gives them a command to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it (Gen 1:28). Meredith Kline argues that this cultural mandate would take urban form. Kline writes,

When we attempted in our account of the sanctions of the God's covenant with Adam to picture the eschatological goal set for man at the beginning, we observed that human history would proceed by way of a development of Megapolis and thence to the Metropolis of the Consummation. Human culture would take city-form. This was inevitable because the city is nothing but the synthesis of the several elements already present in the cultural program that man was directed to carry out. The couple in the garden was to multiply, so providing the citizens of the city. Their cultivation of earth's resources as they extended their control over their territorial environment through the fabrication of sheltering structures would produce the physical architecture of the city. And the authority structure of the human family engaged in the cultural process would constitute the centralized government by which the life and functioning of the city would be organized, under God. The cultural mandate given at creation was thus a mandate to build the city and it would be through the blessing of God on man's faithfulness in the covenanted task that the construction of the city would be completed. Whether, then, we examine the creational order from the perspective of the covenant's stipulations or the perspective of its blessing sanctions, the city comes into view. It is the sum of man's endeavors and the shape of his hope.<sup>42</sup>

This is further supported by a consideration of the garden itself. The garden (גַּן) in Genesis 2 was an "enclosed area for cultivation"; a park surrounded by a hedge.<sup>43</sup> The garden is described as having the tree of life in its middle and with a river that flows through it. This imagery is echoed elsewhere in scripture, for example Psalm 46:4, Zechariah 14:8 and most notably Revelation 22:1, which describes the Holy City, the new Jerusalem which comes from heaven: "Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month (Rev.

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42 Meredith Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview* (Overland Park: Two Age Press, 2000), 163.

43. George Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary Volume 1: Genesis 1-15* (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1987), 61.

22:1-2). There are two possibilities: either the garden has been transformed into a city or the garden was the *precursor* of the Holy City.

Based on these considerations, it is feasible to argue that God has always had an urban design for humanity, and that the city is to be a space of productivity and creativity based on the cultural mandate. Later in Genesis, the development of human culture is associated with the city. Cain's city produces innovations in musicianship, technology, agriculture and architecture (Gen 4:20-22). In Jeremiah 29:4-7, we see that even Babylon is a place where God desires flourishing to happen:

"Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare." (Jer 29:4-7)

The flipside of cities as place of productivity and flourishing is the reality of disparate outcomes for many. Productivity and creativity can lead to human flourishing, but also can lead to greed, self-sufficiency, and heterodoxy. While it may be fair to say that cities attract rather than create the poor, it is also true that not everyone in a city will be able to participate in the flourishing of a city for personal and systemic reasons. If God's design for the city was to amplify human flourishing, then his redemptive purposes for the city would seek to address these issues.

## **City as a Place of Safety**

God also intends for the city to be a place of safety for all its inhabitants. After the Fall, humanity is expelled from the garden and an angel is assigned to guard the garden (Gen 3:24). It can be assumed that the garden was always a place of safety. While man and woman are no longer in the sanctuary of the garden, the city retains its protective design. We see in Genesis 4 that Cain builds his city as a search for security after he is condemned for his murder of Abel (Gen 4:17). One reason cities exist is to provide protection: people will naturally band together for protection from the elements and from other people. As such, ancient cities were defined by their protective wall.

In God's design, cities are to be places of refuge and justice. The density of people allow for people to be set apart for government, laws and justice, hence scripture speaks of elders at the gate who will decide matters of justice and laws (c.f. Deut 21:18-21; Ruth 4:1-11; Josh 20:4). Indeed, God mandates that "You shall appoint judges and officers in all your towns that the LORD your God is giving you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment....Justice, and only justice, you shall follow (Deut 16:18;20)."

Collectively, people in cities are meant to provide safety for one another. From Deuteronomy 22, Bakke points to a distinction made in rape laws that presume the difference a city is supposed to make. He writes,

In chapter 22 you'll find some rather remarkable rape laws. If a woman was raped in a rural area, the people would execute the man who did it (vv. 25-27). If she was raped in the city, on the other hand, they would execute them both (vv. 23-24). Why? There was an assumption in Israel that city victims would cry for help, and neighbors would respond. If there was no response, the first assumption would have been that she didn't cry for help. The law presumed that the presence of neighbors or community is beneficial to the security and salvation of individual persons. That's the role of the city

system, with its walls, gates and code of law, but it's also the role of its righteous remnant.<sup>44</sup>

In Numbers 35 and Joshua 20, God establishes a plan for there to be six cities of refuge among the cities assigned the Levites. These cities of refuge will be places where those who commit unpremeditated or accidental manslaughter can flee to seek justice. "He shall flee to one of these cities and shall stand at the entrance of the gate of the city and explain his case to the elders of that city. Then they shall take him into the city and give him a place, and he shall remain with them (Josh 20:4)." Only cities (and towns) have a sufficient density of people to have people who have the dedicated role of being figures of justice. Biblically, cities are meant to be places where justice is upheld.

In Leviticus 25, when God outlines to Moses how during the Jubilee, property rights will revert to their original bloodlines, an exception is made for homes in "walled cities" (Lev 25:29-30). These houses are not included in the hereditary rights of the people of Israel, which in effect meant that foreigners and resident aliens could purchase homes in the cities of Israel. It was noted previously in this chapter that cities are places that attract minorities. One reason minority groups are attracted to the city is the offer of protection and justice.

Psalm 107 is another biblical example of the city as a place of sanctuary and refuge:

Let the redeemed of the LORD say so,  
    whom he has redeemed from trouble  
and gathered in from the lands,  
    from the east and from the west,  
    from the north and from the south.

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44. Ray Bakke, *A Theology as Big as the City*, (Downers Grove , IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), loc 358-362, Kindle.

Some wandered in desert wastes,  
    finding no way to a city to dwell in;  
hungry and thirsty,  
    their soul fainted within them.  
Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,  
    and he delivered them from their distress.  
He led them by a straight way  
    till they reached a city to dwell in. (Ps 107:2-7)

While cities are meant to be places of safety in scripture, cities are also places where the majority does not always enforce justice (c.f. Sodom and Gomorrah in Gen 19:4-7). Fortified cities while providing safety, can also become places from which people wage war. The existence of laws does not mean they will be enforced with justice or that they are necessarily just to begin with. As such, the redemption of cities according to God's design must seek to rebuild the city as a place of safety.

### **City as a Place of Worship**

Both scripturally and historically, the city is a place of worship. In his history of cities, Joel Kotkin shows that whether Mesopotamian, Chinese or American (i.e. Mexican, Peruvian, etc.), ancient cities were built with religion as the organizing principle.<sup>45</sup> If God's ideal of a city is indeed the culmination of the garden (as argued above), then in God's economy, cities are also to be organized with worship of God at the center. This is the case for Jerusalem, where the temple stands at the apex of the city, and also for the new Jerusalem, where instead of a temple, God is at the center... "And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the

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45. Kotkin, *The City*, 4-7

Almighty and the Lamb” (Rev 21:22). It is also noteworthy that when the promised land is divided among the tribes of Israel, the Levitical tribe which God sets apart to serve him in Israel’s worship are given 48 cities (and some accompanying pastoral land that surround these cities) not land like the other tribes (c.f. Num 35; Josh 21).

The city of Babylon (and its forerunner Babel) stands in contrast to Jerusalem.<sup>46</sup> A pattern of false worship is seen early in scripture in Genesis 11 with Babylon’s forerunner, Babel, built in the land of Shinar (where Babylon would also be built). There, the people decide to use their technology to build a city and “a tower with its top in the heavens”, with the goal of making “a name for ourselves” (Gen 11:3-4). This passage describes the sin of human hubris and self-worship, as though people could stand on par with God.

In scripture, Babylon is the archetype of false worship, immorality and opposition to the people of God.<sup>47</sup> Kuhn writes, “The historic city and empire of Babylon were always depicted by the prophets as the ungodly power *par excellence*. Thus even after the fall of Babylon, Babel, as they saw it, represented for later Jewish readers of Scripture, and also for early Christians, the very epitome and type of an ungodly and domineering city.”<sup>48</sup> Isaiah indicts Babylon for her pride (worship of self): “And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the splendor and pomp of the

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46. While Jerusalem and Babylon are represented as theological archetypes here, their actual history is more complicated. Jesus’s cry outside of Jerusalem in Matt 23:37, ““O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!” (English Standard Version) demonstrates the complex relationship between Jerusalem and God. Babylon (representing the Babylonian empire) while Jerusalem’s enemy and conqueror, was also part of God’s disciplining of Israel.

47. At the same time, in God’s sovereignty, Babylon is used to discipline Israel.

48. Karl Georg Kuhn, “Βαβυλών,” *Theological dictionary of the New Testament*, edited by G. Kittel et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1963), 515

Chaldeans, will be like Sodom and Gomorrah when God overthrew them" (Isa 13:19). The book of Revelation denounces Babylon for her sexual immorality (Rev 17:3; 18:2) which is language used to describe her false worship and opposition to God. Revelation 18:23-24 continues, "and all nations were deceived by your sorcery. And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on earth."<sup>49</sup>

Jacques Ellul writes, "Babylon, the great city, or Babylon the Great. The biggest in the world. No one can rival her, not even Rome. Not because of her historical greatness but because of what she represents mythically. All the cities of the world are brought together in her, she is the synthesis of them all."<sup>50</sup> For Ellul, all cities are Babylon which is an overly pessimistic view of the city, but his point stands that every city has the potential for false worship. Worship is the center of the city, and as such the evil of any city is false worship.<sup>51</sup> Redemption of the city means redeeming the worship of the city.

### **The Already-but-not-Yet of the City**

From scripture, it has been argued that God's creative intent for the city to be a place of productivity, safety and worship centered around him. While the city has failed to be that place, God's redemptive design will prevail with the heavenly city (Revelation). For Christians

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49. In Revelation, Babylon likely does not refer to the actual ancient city of Babylon, but instead to Rome. As such, the ancient city of Babylon was not singularly evil, but represents the potential of all cities towards false worship.

50. Jacques Ellul, *The Meaning of the City* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1970), 20.

51. Sunquist, *Understanding Christian Mission*, 348.

today, one question that can be asked is: when and how will this redemption occur, and what is the role Christians will play?

The book of Hebrews offers some insights into the relationship of present cities with the future city of God. In Hebrews 11:8-10, it is explained that Abraham lived in anticipation of this future city:

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. (Heb 11:8-10)

While it could be assumed that Abraham's calling out of the city and sojourning in tents indicates the superiority of a rural life to urban life, the author of Hebrews says that Abraham was looking forward to living in the city designed and built by God. Like Abraham (who did not settle in this city, at least in Genesis) Um & Buzzard suggest that we too are all "sojourners and exiles seeking a homecoming to the garden city of God. A clear understanding of this will keep us from ever simply equating our earthly cities with that city which is to come."<sup>52</sup> The city of God is not yet.

At the same time, the author of Hebrews writes, "But you *have come* to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering" [emphasis added] (Heb 12:22). As such, the city of God is also "already". Christians have already come to the heavenly city and in a mysterious way are current participants of it, and therefore, Christians are citizens of two cities: the earthly city and heavenly city. The

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52. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 78.

already but not yet aspect of the heavenly city is made clearer in Hebrews 13:12-14, “So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come” (Heb 13:12-14). Jesus’s substitutionary atonement came on a cross outside the city walls, outside of the safety, flourishing and worship of the city. His sacrifice outside the walls of the city becomes the way that people are saved into safety, flourishing and worship of the heavenly city. Therefore, the author of Hebrews urges Christians to also be willing to leave the comforts of the present city, actively seeking the heavenly city. In the next verses, the author exhorts his audience to “acknowledge his name” and “do good” (Heb 13:15-16). The author of Hebrews then, encourages Christians to use the already-ness of their citizenship in heaven to pursue the not-yet aspects of the city to come. As Keller writes, “By his grace, Jesus lost the city-that-was, so we could become citizens of the city-to-come, making us salt and light in the city-that-is.”<sup>53</sup>

If the city is God’s idea, and the purpose of a city is to be a place of worship, safety and flourishing, then God’s redemption will redeem the worship, safety and productivity of the city. Given the brokenness of the city in these areas, what is God’s plan to redeem the city?

### **A Theology of the Gospel**

The gospel is the good news of what God has done and is doing and plans to do to save and redeem his creation. A proper consideration of the gospel must include both soteriology

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53. Keller, *Center Church*, 179.

(the what and how God saves) and eschatology (when will this salvation take place). As such, when considering a theology of gospel movement, we must address two questions: 1. What is the Good News? 2. When will it be brought about?

One's understanding of the gospel will determine the kind of gospel movement that is sought. An understanding of the gospel that is limited to individual salvation in an age to come will lead to a singular focus on converting individuals. In this framework, societal transformation will be either an after-effect of a person becoming like Jesus, or another means by which someone will be attracted to the gospel message. On the other hand, an understanding of the gospel that believes that there is no individual salvation and that God's plan is to bring liberation or justice, will lead to a focus on social justice. However, there will be little power to motivate and change hearts for personal transformation. An understanding of the gospel must include the reality of sin and the Fall, and its impact upon people and God's creation, and how God has a plan for redemption for all creation. In this section, the gospel for both individuals and society will be explored in the form of substitutionary atonement and the kingdom of God.

The next question has to do with the timing of God's plan, i.e. eschatology. The eschatology a Christian holds will determine the type of ministry he/she is led to do. Again, an unrealized eschatology, i.e. an expectation that apart from individual salvation, the kingdom of heaven is entirely a future reality will lead Christians to focus primarily upon conversion and getting ready for future judgment. Whereas, a fully realized eschatology will lead to a focus on changing the world right now. The author proposes that the scriptures point to a both-and framework, an "already-and-not-yet" understanding of God's full salvation.

As Keller points out, the scriptures themselves present the gospel in different ways with different nuances, all of which complement one another. Acknowledging that different theologians can emphasize different aspects of the gospel, in the following section, two gospel narratives will be outlined: a gospel of substitutionary atonement and a gospel of the kingdom in order to build a framework to see how the gospel interacts with the city.

### Substitutionary Atonement

The scriptures present the following story of humanity: God created everything and what he created was good (Genesis 1). Humanity, man and woman, was created in the image of God and was given a mandate to multiply and steward the resources of creation. In the beginning, the man and woman enjoyed a very personal fellowship with God in the garden. However, they rebelled against God and the image of God in them was tarnished in an event called the Fall. The rebellion led to estrangement from God and the breakdown of human relationships. Instead of an ordered life of *shalom* centered around the person and goodness of God and his plans, sinful people sought to center their lives around their own selves.

The above story is the bad news of the human condition. God's answer to humanity's estrangement is the good news: namely the incarnation and substitutionary death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The second person of the trinity, the Son of God, came into the world as a man to teach and demonstrate a better way, and to bring humanity into a relationship with himself. His death on the cross was necessary in order to take on the punishment for humanity's sin and rebellion. Paraphrasing Athanasius, humanity's sin required that humanity provide a sacrifice (be punished), at the same time, only God could provide a

sacrifice that could meet his own demand for justice. Hence, the necessity of the God-man. The good news is the life and work of Jesus (on the cross) who brought (and bought) the offer of salvation for God's rebellious people. Jesus's resurrection showed his victory over death and freedom and life for those who put their faith in him. Put another way, Jesus lived the life humanity should have lived, died the death humanity should have died, and in the resurrection, paves the way for humanity to also have eternal life.

Humanity's role is to receive this good news in faith and believe in Jesus's work. Part of the good news is that it was entirely Jesus's work that accomplished salvation, i.e. it was by God's grace. Humanity did not in any way deserve or merit this grace but does have to receive it through faith. Keller has written much to help the modern church plumb the depths of this gospel and persuasively argues that fully receiving (and understanding) this gospel leads to a gospel dynamic that changes the individual to love and desire to serve Jesus.

The epilogue to this story is still to come. Jesus came the first time to suffer for people's sins and to give them the Holy Spirit. But the Bible points to a second coming when he will judge the world and put a final end to evil, suffering and death (Rom 8:19-21; 2 Pet 3:13) and bring restoration to the world.

The narrative outlined above can be thought of as the good news as presented to individuals. Can this gospel change societies and cities? On the one hand, individual transformation compounded leads to societal transformation, and there are dynamics in the gospel that bring about transformational dynamics for individuals. For example, the gospel of Jesus's propitiatory atonement reveals God's grace and compassion toward individuals. People who have received grace should become more gracious. People who have received compassion

can become more compassionate. People who have received outrageous forgiveness should become more forgiving. The impact of the gospel on a city begins with followers of Christ who are renewed by the gospel to love, forgive, serve, etc.

The scriptures reveal that God cares deeply about the salvation of individuals. The parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the prodigal son in Luke 15 make this point vividly. Jesus reveals through these parables that God and the whole of heaven celebrates when a single sinner returns to the Lord (c.f. Luke 15:7, 10 and 15). However, a gospel of individual salvation and reconciliation with God alone is insufficient to change a society. Richard Mouw offers this thought experiment: if Billy Graham had conducted a nationally televised crusade in Apartheid era South Africa, and every single person in South Africa had heard the gospel that day and accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior, would South Africa at that point no longer be a racist country? Mouw's answer was no. While hearts may have changed by the gospel, South Africa would still have laws and systems that still marginalized Black people. Gospel conversion is not enough to transform society. Instead, people transformed by the gospel must also work to transform their society to reflect the way God wants people to be treated.

The gospel of Jesus's substitutionary death on the cross is good news for individuals, has transformational power, and is the prevailing gospel framework in Western evangelical Christianity. However, there is another complementary gospel framework that more directly addresses cities and societies, namely the gospel of the kingdom.

## The Gospel of the Kingdom

The Gospels tell the story of the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Altogether, these comprise the good news. In the substitutionary atonement framework, Jesus is good news because he is the way by which individuals are able to come to God. In the Kingdom framework, Jesus is good news because he is the way that God comes to the world, as the bringer and King of God's coming kingdom.

### **Jesus and the Kingdom**

The good news that Jesus proclaimed, taught about and demonstrated in the Gospels is found in Matthew 4:17, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt 4:17) (c.f. Mark 1:15; Luke 4:43; Luke 8:1). Even after his resurrection, Jesus taught his disciples about the kingdom (c.f. Acts 1:3) and at the end of Acts, Paul is described as teaching about the kingdom as well (c.f. Acts 28).

How would the pronouncement that the kingdom is at hand have been good news for Jesus's listeners? NT Wright explains that Jesus was the “continuation and climax of the ancient story of Israel.”<sup>54</sup> The prophet Isaiah had said, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns’” (Isa 52:7). In Isaiah's context, the pronouncement of God's reign (or kingdom) would have been good news for a people

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54. N.T. Wright, “Imagining the Kingdom: Mission and Theology in Early Christianity,” October 26, 2011, <http://ntwrightpage.com/2016/07/12/imagining-the-kingdom/>.

struggling with the prospect (and actuality) of exile and foreign domination/rule.<sup>55</sup> Likewise, the news of God's coming kingdom would also have been "good news" for the Jews in Jesus's context where the primary message was "Caesar reigns". Furthermore, Daniel had prophesied that the kingdom of God, his sovereign rule, would one day come toppling pagan rulers (c.f. Daniel 9). Jesus called his hearers to repent, to turn away from other kingdoms and to the kingdom of God.

What is the kingdom? The kingdom is more than the pronouncement of justice. Its meaning can be found in the prayer Jesus taught his disciples: "your kingdom come" which is explained by the following line, "your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt 6:10).<sup>56</sup> In the Fall, humanity chose for its own will to be done, and thereby rejected God as king, but in Jesus, God was reestablishing his direct rule and kingship. It is important to understand that the kingdom of God is not primarily a realm or a place, but the reign or kingship of God. Dallas Willard describes the kingdom as "the range of God's effective will, where what he wants done is done. The person of God himself and the action of his will are the organizing principles of his kingdom, but everything that obeys those principles, whether by nature or by choice, is *within* his kingdom."<sup>57</sup> As such, the kingdom of God is not essentially a social or political reality (c.f.

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55. The Deuteronomistic Historian hints that Israel's struggles originate with their desire to be ruled by a human king as opposed to God over-and-against Samuel's appeals (1 Sam 8:19). God tells Samuel "they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them (1 Sam 8:7)."

56. While it may be possible to read Matt 6:9-10 as a threefold petition (i.e. hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done), given the primacy of the kingdom message in Jesus's preaching, it is likely that asking for the kingdom to come is also primary in this prayer. As such, the rest of the prayer as well as the Sermon on the Mount is an explication of the kingdom.

57. Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God* (New York: Harper Collins, 1997), 25.

John 18:36).<sup>58</sup> Nor is the kingdom equivalent to the visible church, although there is certainly overlap with the church. While the kingdom is not a place (c.f. Luke 17:20) where we can say, “here it is,” or “there it is,” the kingdom is also not something that exists only in human hearts.<sup>59</sup> Instead, the kingdom pervades and will govern the whole of the physical universe. Wherever God’s will is being done on earth as it is in heaven, the kingdom is present. Jesus did not come to make converts but to make disciples, i.e. men and women who would be subjects in his kingdom.

This exposition of the kingdom as God’s will being done may be unsettling as it clashes with general assumptions of God’s sovereignty. Is God not already sovereign? Is it possible that his will is not being done? If the Lord’s Prayer is taken seriously, then it must be acknowledged that there must be ways in which God’s will is not currently being done. A brief survey of scripture, human history and the current affairs of the world makes it clear that God’s will is actually not being done *on earth* as it is in heaven.

Jesus’s message was that the kingdom of God was at hand. His teachings (mostly in parables) were about the kingdom and life in the kingdom. His own life was the embodiment of a kingdom life, and his ministry was a demonstration that the kingdom of God was indeed available and coming through him. Jesus ministered with words and deeds, preaching and power, messages and with miracles. In the Gospels, Jesus is depicted as healing the sick,

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58. Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 25.

59. This understanding of the kingdom as something that is “within hearts” may come from an incorrect understanding of Luke 17:20 where in various translations (e.g. KJV, NIV), Jesus says, “the kingdom of God is within you.” A better translation might be “among” or “in the midst” (as in the NASB and ESV).

casting out demons and also fellowshipping with those who were not considered righteous. These actions were more than Jesus doing miraculous things because he was the Son of God, but rather a demonstration that in God's kingdom, there was healing and deliverance. In Matthew 12:28, Jesus told his skeptics, "But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God *has come* upon you [emphasis added]." When Jesus sent his disciples out, he told them to do likewise: "Proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons" (Matt 10:7-8). Jesus's fellowship with sinners and tax-collectors, etc., shows that the eschatological banquet was at hand, and that even those who were considered outside the kingdom of God were invited (c.f. the parable of the Great Banquet, Luke 14:15-24).

The good news Jesus preached and demonstrated then was that kingdom of God – God's peaceful, just, righteous and gracious rule – was at hand through Jesus. Jesus's death was the means by which his kingdom would strike a decisive blow against the kingdom of darkness (and death). The cross was God's climactic action to advance his kingdom of forgiveness and healing. By his grace, the cross is the basis by which individuals enter the kingdom, but it is also the basis by which societies can change.

In Luke 4, Jesus reads a portion of Isaiah 61:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives  
and recovering of sight to the blind,  
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (Luke 4:18-19)

The gospel of the kingdom is more than a social gospel, but the gospel itself is profoundly social. Even if one understands this passage in a “spiritual” way, rather than a more literal sense, there is a sense in which there is societal freedom and healing in mind. However, there is no need to limit this prophecy to merely spiritual and heart matters. The many prophetic texts in the Old Testament and the actions of the early church and the writings of the apostles did not limit ministry to merely spiritual activity but also included social action.

### **The Kingdom and Gospel Impact**

In the substitutionary model, the gospel leads to reconciliation between individuals and God, which means that a gospel movement would be primarily evidenced by the conversion of individuals to Christianity, or the renewal of faith within the church. However, a kingdom framework would consider anything that advances the kingdom as gospel impact. Followers of Jesus who are impacted by the gospel of the Kingdom will be asking “what is God’s will?” and praying for it to be done.

What then does scripture reveal about God’s will? While it is not possible to comprehensively define God’s will (since after-all, his ways are higher than humanity’s ways), scripture does reveal some points of emphasis. For example, the whole of the Lord’s Prayer is profoundly kingdom-oriented, is set in a sermon (the “Sermon on the Mount”) that is itself an exposition of life in God’s kingdom, and gives insight to what Christians are to pray for as they ask for God’s kingdom to come. Read in this way the Lord’s Prayer reveals that in the kingdom:

- God is hallowed (v.9), i.e. he is set apart as holy and as King.
- God’s will is done on earth just as it is done in heaven (v.10)

- There is daily provision of material needs (v.11) (cf. Matt 6:31-33)
- There is forgiveness (v.12) (cf. Matt 18:21-35)
- There is deliverance from temptation and evil (v.13)

It is also evident that in God desires for people to be saved (cf. John 3:16, 1 Tim 2:4, 2 Pet 3:9, Ezek 18:23). He does not take pleasure in the perishing of the unrepentant. In his love, God desires to restore and redeem his children. However, salvation in the gospel of the kingdom, while including individual salvations, is more wholistic. The end game is not just salvation for individuals out of individual sin into a relationship with God, but salvation of the world from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light.

Other values in God's kingdom are summarized in Micah 6:8: "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Mic 6:8). Jesus's teachings about the kingdom reinforce the importance of *justice* (c.f. the teaching of the sheep and goats, Matt 25:31-40), *kindness* (c.f. the parable of the Good Samaritan, Luke 10:25-37) and *humility* (cf. Matt 18:4, 20:24-28). Justice, which will be defined here as relational righteousness, is a big theme in the prophetic texts of the Old Testament. God radically cares about how people treat other people, and especially those who are on the margins, for example, widows, orphans, aliens and prisoners (e.g. Jas 1:27; Zech 7:10; Ps 68:5; Mal 3:5; Isa 1:17).<sup>60</sup>

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60. This theme of justice is not wholly lacking in the substitutionary model of the atonement, just relatively underemphasized by practitioners.

Finally, God desires relational righteousness particularly among his people (i.e. his church). Jesus's disciples are to love one another just as they are loved by Jesus (John 13:34). Later in John 17, Jesus prays that his disciples would be one just he and the Father are one. This is possible through Jesus. In Ephesians 2:14, Paul writes, "For [Jesus] himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility" (Eph 2:14).

The question of how the kingdom advances in the city will be treated in the following section on *movement*, however, Kuyper's view of sphere sovereignty is worth considering at this point. In his *Lectures on Calvinism*, Kuyper outlines a view whereby God is sovereign in every sphere of human society, whether church, state or society (e.g. family, business, science, art, etc.).<sup>61</sup> In each of these spheres, individual Christians were to operate in a distinctively Christian way, asking what God's will was for this sphere. God is sovereign over every sphere, and his kingdom will advance in every sphere. God has a plan to "unite *all* things in [Jesus Christ], things in heaven and things in earth" [emphasis added] (Eph 1:10). Jesus commanded his followers to always "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" (Matt 6:33). This commandment was not a matter of rejecting the world ("what shall we eat?", "what shall we drink?" or "what shall we wear?") but rather prioritizing God's kingdom (his reign) in the midst of the world. In the author's view, Kuyper's important contribution here was to show that God's kingdom was bigger than the church. The gospel of the kingdom ought to impact every sphere of society. While Kuyper's separation of church, state and society is problematic as

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61. Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1931), 91.

distinctive spheres overly marginalizes the role of the church, yet the kingdom of God is bigger than the church.

### **The Already-but-Not-Yet of the Kingdom**

Jesus's message and ministry centered around the theme of the coming kingdom. A question that can be asked is when will it come? Or more precisely, when will the kingdom come in its fullness? One's answer to this question will shape one's theological vision and philosophy of ministry. For example, if the kingdom is already here, this might lead to a focus on supernatural ministry on the one hand, or a focus on solving social ills. If the kingdom is wholly future, then this could lead to a focus on evangelism and saving people for the future kingdom. However, the New Testament does not give a simple answer to this question, and instead describes the kingdom as both present and future, here but not yet.

For example, Jesus's equates his ministry with the presence of God's kingdom: "But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Matt 12:28). In Rom 14:17, Paul writes, "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom 14:17). In addition, in Col 1:13, "He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son" (Col 1:13). These verses speak to the present reality of the kingdom.

At the same time, there is a future aspect to the kingdom: Jesus's disciples are instructed to pray "your kingdom come" (Matt 6:10) which means the kingdom has not yet come in its fullness. Also, Jesus teaches, "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation

of the world' (Matt 25:34)." Peter writes, "For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:11). The present pain and brokenness that is observable in the world today suggests that the kingdom is not fully present.

To the extent that the kingdom is both here and not yet, means that Christians seeking to participate in God's kingdom will care about evangelism and social justice, preparing for the future kingdom and advancing the present kingdom. Following Jesus the King, Christians will preach the gospel of the kingdom and demonstrate the gospel of the kingdom in deeds of justice and mercy.

### Church and the City

How does the gospel lead Christians minister to the city? This is a question of theological vision. Per Keller: "Between one's doctrinal beliefs and ministry practices should be a well-conceived vision for how to bring the gospel to bear on the particular cultural setting and historical moment. This is something more practical than just doctrinal beliefs but much more theological than "how-to-steps" for carrying out a particular ministry."<sup>62</sup> Part of a theological vision for the city is asking the questions: What does God intend to do about the city? How does he intend to use the church? In other words, this is an issue of contextualizing the gospel for the city.

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62. Keller, *Center Church*, 18.

Niebuhr's Christ and Culture typology<sup>63</sup> asks profoundly helpful questions about our theological vision. A practitioner's theological perspective on the city and how the gospel comes to bear upon the city will shape their missional goals and beliefs. For example, a Christ-against-the-City perspective might advocate withdrawal from the city and a focus on either evangelism (saving people for the kingdom to come) or a focus on ministering to the poor (to protest the idols of culture).<sup>64</sup>

Niebuhr's typology has its flaws and over-generalizations (as do all typologies). One major flaw is that the City and the Church are not static. Both change over time and both influence one another. Since the church is more than a witness or proclaimer of the gospel but also a "city on a hill" (Matt 5:14) - i.e. a visual demonstration of the gospel - then both the church and its message must be contextualized to the city (c.f. 1 Cor 9:20-22).

David Currie's excellent essay, "Ecclesiopolis,"<sup>65</sup> shows that historically the church was most successful in its witness when it utilized the strengths of the culture (sociological and technological).<sup>66</sup> For example, the church was able to utilize technological innovations in transportation (e.g. roads, shipping, railroads, etc.) and media (e.g. printing press) to spread the message. The church also adapted to sociological forms innovated in the city (such as volunteer

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63. H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ & Culture* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1951).

64. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to examine each of Niebuhr's types. The Christ-against-the-City type is given as an illustration. A deeper examination of this topic will be undertaken in chapter three.

65. David A. Currie, "Ecclesiopolis," in *Reaching for the New Jerusalem: A Biblical and Theological Framework for the City*, ed. Park, Seong Hyun, Spencer Aída Besançon, and William David Spencer (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2013).

66. Currie's arguments are covered in more depth in chapter three.

societies in the industrial age) to reorganize itself to better carry out its mission in that particular context. In turn, the city was changed by the church.

One implication of this mutual influence of the church and city is that it would behoove the church to consider how to utilize the strengths of the city: its potential for innovation through clustered density and connective diversity; as well as modern technological and sociological innovations, such as the internet and platform companies.<sup>67</sup>

### **City Gospel Movement**

In order to lay the overall theological framework for city gospel movement, the theological concepts of *city* and *gospel* have been treated separately as distinct concepts. It is impossible however to lay out a separate framework for *movement* since the word has a wide linguistic range, and ultimately the linguistic context provides the meaning. It is meaningless to discuss what “God thinks about movement?” as it is far too broad and undefined a question. Instead, the question this thesis-project is seeking to ask is: what does God (and the Bible) say about city gospel movement? In this section, first, building upon the frameworks above, city gospel movement will be defined as the advancement of God’s kingdom in a city. Second, Jesus’s role in initiating gospel movement will be considered. Finally, this section will conclude with a framework for what kingdom advancement looks like for the city.

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67. Platform Companies are companies that provide a platform for producers and consumers to interact, e.g. AirBnB, Amazon, Uber, etc.

## A Definition of (City Gospel) Movement

The word “movement” has become ubiquitous in modern Christian vernacular. The range of meaning in Christian usage includes an organization or network of churches<sup>68</sup>, but conversely means something that is “organic” and *not* organized/institutionalized.<sup>69</sup> Movement can mean rapid proliferation or multiplication (particularly in church planting contexts)<sup>70</sup>, or a value/idea that takes root in a society in some way. More broadly, the definition of movement is either oriented around people (whether a group or organization or individuals), or oriented around societal change (which includes people but is bigger than any or many segments of the population). Alternatively, these different definitions of movement can be divided into definitions that center around the work of people and those that center around the work of the Holy Spirit.

Mac Pier’s definition of gospel movement appears to fall in the category of societal change rather than the creation of an organization. He writes,

I believe a gospel movement is taking place when one or more of the following three dynamics is happening:

- Christianity is growing faster than the general population.
- Christianity is achieving measurable progress against the great social and humanitarian problems of a city or community.

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68. For example, the author is part of Acts Ministries International (AMI), which is self-described as a “community of apostolic churches”, but others would call AMI a movement or a network or even a denomination, depending on one’s cultural context.

69. Keller contrasts movements with institutions in *Center Church*, 338.

70. Church planting movements (CPM) are defined by David Garrison as “a rapid multiplication of indigenous churches planting churches that sweeps through a people group or population segment.” David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements: How God is Redeeming a Lost World* (Monument, CO: WIGTake Resources, 2012), loc 244, Kindle.

- Christians are increasingly finding themselves in places of cultural influence, and Christianity is penetrating the arenas of cultural influence: morals, aesthetics, and knowledge.<sup>71</sup>

Pier does not explicitly define movement elsewhere in *A Disruptive Gospel*, hence, it will be assumed that Pier's definition of movement primarily has to do with the impact of the gospel in society, whether in evangelistic terms (people coming to know Jesus), social justice terms (humanitarian problems being addressed) or cultural terms (culture is being influenced by Christians/Christianity).<sup>72</sup> Proceeding from an understanding of the gospel as "the gospel of the kingdom," a city gospel movement will be defined as the ways in which the kingdom of God advances in a city impacting its residents, social systems and physical fabric of the city.

In other words, a city gospel movement will not be defined as a specific group of people, churches or organizations. While a group of churches, organizations or individuals in any given city could certainly choose to describe themselves as a "city gospel movement" and this could be understandable from a semantic perspective, this author proposes that the end goal of a Movement Day for example, should not be limited to creating a collaboration or an organization of like-minded Christians who have gospel aims, but rather to join with God in order that the kingdom of God is tangibly advancing in a city.<sup>73</sup>

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71. Pier, *A Disruptive Gospel*, 22.

72. Pier's suggested indicating dynamics can be critiqued for their universal applicability, but these three categories are helpful ways to think of the gospel's impact.

73. This is not to downplay the value of creating such a network or organization which is significant. In addition, if such a newly formed network was the mark of an unprecedented display of unity in the city, as opposed to another splinter group, it could indeed be thought of the kingdom moving in a city.

## Jesus as the Initiator of Gospel Movement

Jesus was not only the subject of the gospel; he was the first initiator of gospel movement. Jesus's gospel of the kingdom itself was movement-al, beginning with his pronouncement: "Repent..." in other words, respond, turn and move toward God, "for the kingdom of God is at hand" ...the kingdom of God has begun to arrive. Or put another way, "turn and move to God for God is moving". Following Jesus's pronouncement, he demonstrated the reality of the moving kingdom: sick people were healed, the demonized were set free, and sinful people were invited to follow him.

Through his teachings and commands, Jesus set a kingdom movement dynamic at the heart of his ministry. He told his followers that they were salt and light to their communities and beyond, in such a way that others would be drawn towards the Father:

"You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." (Matt 5:13-16)

Believers are to bless others in such a way that God is glorified. In other words, they were to live out their horizontal relationships in such a way that others are enveloped into the vertical relationship with God. This missional dynamic is evident in Jesus's other commandments. In John 13:34, on the eve of his crucifixion, he gave his disciples a new commandment: "just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34). The Great Commandment reminds us to love God and love people. The Great Commission (Matt 28:19-

20) is clearly movement-al: disciples were to go and make more disciples (not of themselves but) of Jesus. They were to do this by immersing the new disciples into the reality of the kingdom (“baptize them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit”), and the will of God (“teach them to do all that I have commanded you”). Finally, Jesus tells his disciples in Acts 1:8, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). With Matt 28:19 and Acts 1:8, the movement of the kingdom will go forth from Jerusalem and Galilee and encapsulate every nation, indeed the whole world. Believers are called to join this movement.

There is clearly a human component to how the kingdom advances. Using sociological research, Rodney Stark argues that conversions happen primarily through social networks and not doctrine and that converts become doctrinally more committed and clearer after conversion. “By now dozens of close-up studies of conversion have been conducted. All of them confirm that social networks are the basic mechanism through which conversion takes place. To convert someone, you must first become that person’s close and trusted friend. But even your best friends will not convert if they already are highly committed to another faith.”<sup>74</sup> Friendship, love, living out one’s faith are critical components to helping others come to know God.

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74. Stark, *Cities of God*, 13.

## The Mystery of Kingdom Movement

While there is a clear human role in the kingdom movement as outlined in Jesus's commandments and teachings, Jesus's parables warn against triumphalism and presumption in joining this kingdom movement. Indeed, these parables provide a caution to this entire thesis-project's endeavor. Mark 4:26-29 in particular speaks to the mystery of the Kingdom: "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come" (Mark 4:26-29). While the man in the parable has a role in sowing the seeds, the growth of the plant is beyond his control or cognition. Ultimately, God not humanity is in control of the kingdom advancing and Christians will not always understand how the kingdom is advancing.

The parables of the tare and net (Matt 13:24-30, 13:47-50) reveal that as the kingdom advances, good and evil people will live side by side until the final day of judgment, which indicates again that there will people for whom the kingdom does not seem to impact (at least spiritually). This point is further supported by the parable of the four soils or sower (Mark 4:1-20; Matt 13:3-23; Luke 8:5-15). Only one of the four soils produces a harvest. The other three soils receive the seed of the kingdom but there is no lasting impact. Ladd writes, "the kingdom of God is here but not with irresistible power... the kingdom of God has come among men and yet men can reject it."<sup>75</sup>

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75. Ladd, *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, 56.

The parables of the mustard seed (Mark 4:30-32; Matt 13:31-32; Luke 13:18-19) and leaven (Matt 13:33; Lk 13:20-21) likewise reveal that the kingdom will start small and seemingly insignificant but will have a large impact. Ladd cautions here against reading into these parables a theology of gradual growth.<sup>76</sup> It is tempting to draw from these two parables a universal theology of how the kingdom moves today. However, it is important to note that the subject of the parables is actually Jesus. He was the unexpected, seemingly insignificant, seed and leaven, who brought the kingdom through a humiliating death on the cross. This does not mean that the kingdom always moves in small and insignificant ways. However, it may be permissible to note that like Jesus, the kingdom may move in unexpected, seemingly insignificant ways today.

Finally, part of the mystery of the kingdom is that God is not limited to using Christians. In scripture, God's ultimate sovereignty is exercised even over non-believers, for example, Cyrus whom God describes as his anointed (Isa 45:1). Also, just as God makes his sun rise upon the just and the unjust, and sends rain to the just and the unjust, there is common grace by which everyone experiences a limited form of God's grace and will.

### Gospel Movement in the City

The city was designed to be a place of safety, flourishing and worship (of God). However, with the Fall, people flock to the city to find safety and flourishing, but don't always find it, and indeed these pursuits lead them away from worship of God. The city enterprise was

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76. Ladd, *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, 60.

meant to be centered around God, but instead has lost its true center. The gospel is God's answer to this loss and brokenness. In Jesus, individuals can receive forgiveness and be reconciled in their relationship with God. In Jesus, the kingdom, the reign of God, invades the city and re-aligns the city around God. A city gospel movement is the process by which this happens.

After Peter preached the gospel on the Day of Pentecost, a gospel movement became visible in Jerusalem. Luke describes the first church:

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. (Acts 2:42-47)

Some marks of city gospel movement are:

1. Salvation for individuals. In the case of the Acts church in Jerusalem, individuals were daily receiving salvation (v.47).
2. A devotion to scripture and the apostolic teaching (v.42). Presumably bible engagement will increase as well as obedience to the teachings/commands of Jesus.
3. Increased relational health and unity in the church (v.42 and 44). Christians will love one another in the same way Jesus loves. Ethnic and class barriers will be overcome as Christians fellowship and break bread with one another.

4. There will be fervent prayer that is “regular, united and fruitful.”<sup>77</sup> (v.42) Prayer is both a catalyst to God’s will being done (Matt 6:10) and the fruit of the kingdom coming, as people are encouraged to pray even more as they are drawn deeper in their relationship with God.
5. Answered prayers will come in the form of miracles (v.43), in the form of healing and deliverance.
6. Love for neighbor and generosity will increase (v.45). Individual and societal needs and inequities will be addressed as Christians generously bring their resources to bear.
7. Observers will look favorably upon Christians and the Church (v.46) and will eventually join the Christian community. A virtuous cycle (or self-propagating dynamics) will be established where more and more individuals enter into a relationship with God and become devoted to Jesus as Lord, loving others and praying, etc.
8. As the gospel spreads to other cities, churches will be established (Acts 9:31, 11:26, 14:23). These churches will participate in God’s kingdom and will send out people to spread the gospel and plant churches (Acts 13:1-3).

On a city level, one would expect that the all other things being equal, the percentage of Christians would increase relative to the population.<sup>78</sup> Social inequities would decrease due to the generosity of the growing church. Given God’s common grace, it would not be surprising to

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77. Tom White, *The Practitioner’s Guide: Building City Gospel Movements* (Tallmadge, OH: Good Place Publishing, 1992), loc 441, Kindle.

78. For many of the world’s cities, “all other things” are not equal, particularly population growth from an influx of people into the city. As cities experience explosive population increases, using percentages may not be an accurate reflection of whether God is at work, as a number of people may be coming to know Christ but still conversions may be unable to keep up with population growth.

see cooperation between believers and non-believers as they work together for the flourishing of the city. As God redeems his city and changes the worship of the city, productivity and safety will also increase.

### **Catalyzing a City Gospel Movement: A Theology of Conferencing**

The role of Jesus as the initiator and ultimately controller of gospel movement has already been discussed. Yet, from the practitioner's perspective, are there scriptural lessons that can be learned about how Christians can participate in the catalyzing of city gospel movements? Is there a theological basis by which conferencing or gathering can help propel a city gospel movement?<sup>79</sup>

#### Theological Perspectives on Conferencing

##### **Conferencing Around the Word**

The parable of the soils reveals that a movement of God's kingdom begins with the sowing of the word (Mark 4:14). In many of Boston's revivals (see chapter 1), preaching of the word was a critical component in past revival movements. The word seems an indispensable condition for gospel movements. However, the word is a not sufficient condition.

Jesus's ministry included preaching and teaching, but also healing, deliverance and fellowship with sinners. The early church and Paul continued his kingdom ministry of preaching, teaching, healing and delivering and concretely loving the lost. Paul's ministry in

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79. Conferencing and gathering are being used synonymously in this chapter.

Acts 16 is instructive. Three different people interact with Paul (and Silas), and each are brought into the kingdom in different ways. Lydia, a seller of purple goods, is converted and baptized after God opens her heart to “pay attention to what was said by Paul” (Acts 16:14). The slave girl comes into the kingdom through an act of deliverance from both spiritual and social oppression (Acts 16:18-19). Finally, the jailer experiences the power of God as well as Paul and Silas’s compassion when they choose not to escape after an earthquake breaks open the doors of the prison (Acts 16:25-34).

### **Conferencing around Prayer**

The early church devoted itself to prayer (e.g. Acts 1:14, 2:42, 4:24-31, 6:4), including one hundred twenty believers in the upper room who prayed and waited according to Jesus’s instructions for ten days. Preachers have often noted that the first church prayed for ten days (Acts 1-2), preached ten minutes, and saw three thousand come to Christ, while the modern church prays ten minutes, preaches ten days and sees a handful come to Christ.

Both in scripture and in history, kingdom advancement has often been preceded by extraordinary prayer that is “united, persistent, and kingdom-centered.”<sup>80</sup> Jesus taught his disciples to pray for God’s kingdom to come, and since ultimately kingdom advancement is a work of the Holy Spirit, prayer must be an intrinsic component to kingdom movement.

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80. Keller, *Center Church*, 73.

Finally, it can be noted that extraordinary prayer may not only precede kingdom movement. Extraordinary united prayer can also be the fruit of gospel renewal in the Church.

### **Conferencing in the Power of Unity**

Modifying the Lausanne Statement, there is great kingdom potential when the whole church takes the whole gospel to the whole city. Mac Pier writes, “the vibrancy of the gospel in any city is proportionate to the depth of relationship and visible unity between leaders in that same city.”<sup>81</sup> The schisms in the church that have been particularly visible since the Reformation are likely to undermine the credibility of the gospel. Jesus said, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand” (Matt 12:25). The context of this teaching is Jesus arguing against those who were saying he was healing by the power of the devil. He points out that the kingdom of darkness also needs unity to stand. How much so, the kingdom of God? Christian unity is necessary to demonstrate Christian love to the world. If a conference gathers the larger church in love – breaking down barriers of race, culture and economic status, the conference itself is a gospel expression that can testify to the world about Jesus, revealing the truth of Eph 2:14 and Gal 3:28.

Practically speaking, it is difficult to conceive of love and unity outside of the context of some kind of localized gathering. Just as Christians met together in the temple on a regular basis in Acts 2, so too there is kingdom potential when Christians gather, all the more-so, when

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81. Pier, *A Disruptive Gospel*, 53.

Matthew 18:20, “where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them” (Matt 18:20).<sup>82</sup>

### **Conferencing and Leaven**

The parable of leaven offers an interesting question: how much leaven is necessary to leaven the bread? Or put differently, what is a sufficient number of Christians in order for there to be gospel movement? To use Malcolm Gladwell’s language, is there a tipping point to the kingdom? The Bible offers a number of possible answers:

- One person. In Jeremiah 5:1, God asks, “Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, look and take note! Search her squares to see if you can find a man, one who does justice and seeks truth, that I may pardon her” (Jer 5:1). God is looking for one just man that he may forgive Jerusalem. Of course, the scriptures point to the one just man who would bring about forgiveness: Jesus, who is the central figure and initiator of the gospel.
- Two or three. As read earlier, in Matthew 18:19-20, Jesus declared, “Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them” (Matt 18:19-20).
- Ten. In Genesis 18, Abraham pleads with God on Sodom and Gomorrah’s behalf. He begins by asking if God would destroy the cities if there were fifty righteous men in those two

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82. This verse speaks to the beauty and power of Christians acting together in love. While the verse suggests the beautiful sufficiency of two or three (i.e. large gatherings are not always necessary), it can be asked how much more powerful would the gathering of the whole church be?

cities. God agrees not to punish Sodom and Gomorrah if they contain fifty righteous men.

Abraham continues to negotiate down until he reaches ten, "Then he said, 'Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose ten are found there.' [God] answered, 'For the sake of ten I will not destroy it'" (Gen 18:32).

- Eleven or Twelve. The Great Commission is given to the eleven.
- One hundred twenty are gathered in Acts 2 to pray before Pentecost.
- Three Hundred. God uses three hundred soldiers under Gideon to destroy Israel's enemies (Judg 7:16).
- One church. A single church could be used by God to be part of the beginning of a wider gospel movement. The Moravian church is such an example. Park Street Church has often been at the forefront of revivals in Boston's history. However, unless the church was the only church in the city, the movement would need to spread and impact multiple churches to be considered a city gospel movement.

God is able to do much with little as the feeding of the five thousand demonstrates.

Interestingly, sociological studies validate the idea of a tipping point, a necessary percentage size for when the minority can influence the majority population. For example, a study from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute found that "when just 10 percent of the population holds an unshakable belief, their belief will always be adopted by the majority of society."<sup>83</sup> Another

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<sup>83</sup> 83. *Rensselaer News*, "Minority Rules: Scientists Discover Tipping Point for the Spread of Ideas," <https://news.rpi.edu/luwakkey/2902>, accessed January 8, 2020.

study by the University of Pennsylvania suggests that the tipping point for large scale social change is 25%.<sup>84</sup>

These passages (and this study) point to the power of the faithfulness of a few.

Jesus's teaching about salt and light in Matthew 5:13-16 assumes that there will be enough salt to be effective in the world. In order for salt to be effective, i.e. to be good for something, there has to be sufficient salt and the salt must penetrate into that which is being seasoned. It is the author's contention that there is enough penetrative salt in society when Christians gather together to collaborate on city-focused blessing.

### Practical Considerations of Conferencing

Earlier in this chapter, the benefits of clustered density and connected diversity were articulated. If cities are hubs for innovation when they have clustered density and connective diversity, then this must also apply to the church and gospel innovation. Conferencing is one way to harness the creative energy that can come from the full diversity of the church clustered and connected together. Many churches are silo-ed in the city, operating as segregated clusters of non-diverse density. However, diverse churches connected together have innovative potential, and a wider capacity to discern and see what God is doing. Christians connected together across ethnic, social, economic lines as well as vocational lines, holds great kingdom potential.

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<sup>84</sup> 84. *Penn Today*, "Tipping Point for Large Scale Social Change? Just 25 percent," June 7, 2018. <https://penntoday.upenn.edu/news/damon-centola-tipping-point-large-scale-social-change>, accessed January 8, 2020. The same article states that other studies suggest tipping points anywhere from 10 percent to 40 percent.

Ed Glaeser explains one of the dynamics behind this, namely the importance of face-to-face contact. He writes,

One experiment performed by two researchers at the University of Michigan challenged groups of six students to play a game in which everyone could earn money by cooperating. One set of groups met for ten minutes face-to-face to discuss strategy before playing. Another set of groups had thirty minutes for electronic interaction. The groups that met in person cooperated well and earned more money. The groups that had only connected electronically fell apart, as members put their personal gains ahead of the group's needs. This finding resonates well with many other experiments, which have shown that face-to-face contact leads to more trust, generosity, and cooperation than any other sort of interaction.<sup>85</sup>

This research would indicate that gathering people is insufficient. A conference where the majority of the participants are listening to a single speaker does not produce the kind of face-to-face contact that leads to “trust, generosity and cooperation”. Rather, it is important to connect participants in face-to-face settings.

One such method is called “Open Space Technology” which has been incorporated at recent Movement Days in New York.<sup>86</sup> Open Space Technology (OST) is about creating an environment where participants self-organize without a preplanned agenda but around a particular preplanned focus. Attendees are free to participate or not participate, to move around in different small contexts, all of which gives them the freedom to maximize face-to-face connecting. OST was developed in the 1980s by Harrison Owen, an episcopal priest, who found to his chagrin after a conference that he had planned and organized meticulously, that the parts of the conference the attendees most enjoyed were precisely the parts that he had no

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85. Glaeser, *Triumph of the City*, 34.

86. Open Space Technology is a misnomer in the sense that there is no technology involved at all.

part planning, i.e. the coffee breaks. He wondered if it would be possible to have a conference filled with “coffee break energy”. Coffee breaks are the time in a conference when participants are fully free to meet and talk with the people around them. OST seeks to capture this energy by providing an unstructured free environment.

Finally, it is evident that a single gathering is insufficient to maximize these dynamics. Regular re-gatherings are necessary to remind the body of the core vision and values. Unity is not displayed by a one-off gathering, but in tangible visible displays of love. A conference lasts one or two days, but God is working all the time (c.f. John 5:17). A city gospel movement is much bigger than a conference or an organization or a network. In the end, a conference should only be a moment in a much bigger movement.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

This chapter has sought to argue that cities have always been part of God’s design and hold great potential. God’s intent was that cities be places centered on worship, safety and human flourishing. However, the Fall led cities to become places of self-worship, brokenness and inequity. God’s plan to redeem the city can be seen in the gospel which was articulated in this chapter in two ways: the gospel of substitutionary atonement and the gospel of the kingdom. These two presentations speak of how Jesus made a way for humanity to be reconciled with God, and how Jesus was the way God came to the world. A kingdom theology is profoundly helpful in understanding both the gospel and also how the gospel *moves* in the world. A city gospel movement is the movement of God’s kingdom in the context of a city. Christians participate in a city gospel movement when they are praying for and participating in

God's will being done in a city. God's will includes (but is not limited to): salvation for individuals and communities; justice, mercy and humility; and unity.

As the king, Jesus is the initiator and controller of any gospel movement. The Church does not initiate a gospel movement, rather it is intrinsically part of Jesus' gospel movement. At the same time, the Church does participate in and accelerate Jesus's movement as it moves in obedience to his will, through prayer, proclamation, demonstration of God's justice and compassion. In particular, there is great movement-al power as the church does these things together, in missional unity.

As such, there is a vital role that conferences can play in gospel movement, insofar as the conference brings the church together in unity to worship, pray and begin to act in accordance with God's will. Just as the city holds great innovative power when clustered densities of diversity are connected together, the church holds innovative gospel movement-al power when the diverse church is connected together.

In the next chapter, thought leaders in the field of city gospel movement, as well as other relevant writers, will be surveyed for a broader examination of this topic.

## CHAPTER 3

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Introduction to and Survey of the Extant Literature**

This chapter will survey some of the extant literature relevant to this thesis-project's topic, focusing upon six writers who are prominent thinkers in the city gospel movement space. In alphabetical order, these are Ray Bakke, Harvey Conn, Tim Keller, Mac Pier, Eric Swanson and Stephen Um. Each of these authors will be brought into conversation with one another, using the same rubric of city, gospel and movement, utilized in the previous chapter.

In addition, ten other authors bring important contributions to this topic. Jacques Ellul, Ed Glaeser, Meredith Kline, Joel Kotkin and Scott Sunquist's contributions to the subject of cities will be considered. Richard Niebuhr and David Currie bring important insights to how the gospel (and the church) have historically intersected with cities. Finally, Steve Addison, David Garrison and Alan Hirsch's writings on movement will be surveyed.

First, these authors will be given a brief introduction, and then for the remainder of the chapter, these authors will be brought into conversation with one another (and with the thesis-project author). Many of these authors have already been quoted in chapter two. Where this has happened, this chapter will note and summarize earlier arguments and seek to focus on additional insights not covered by the second chapter.

## Authors in the City Gospel Movement field

### **Raymond J Bakke, *A Theology as Big as the City*<sup>1</sup>**

Ray Bakke is a former pastor and urban missiologist. His book *A Theology as Big as the City* is considered a seminal text for urban mission. Bakke does not present a conventional theological text but rather presents a collection of ministry anecdotes and biblical reflections that shaped his theology of the city. Bakke argues that the primary challenge in urban mission is theological in that most Christians are reading the Bible with rural lenses.<sup>2</sup> His goal is to challenge the evangelical church (and especially non-urban churches) to engage the structures and individuals that comprise a city rather than focus only on individual needs and individual problems.

### **Harvie Conn, “The Kingdom of God and the City of Man”<sup>3</sup>; “Genesis as Urban Prologue”<sup>4</sup>;**

### ***Urban Ministry*<sup>5</sup>**

Harvie Conn was a missionary to South Korea, an urban missiologist and professor at Westminster Theological Seminary, where he was also Tim Keller’s D.Min supervisor. His essay, “The Kingdom of God and the City of Man,” is a history of theological perspectives on the city,

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1. Ray Bakke, *A Theology as Big as the City* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), Kindle.

2. Bakke, *A Theology as Big as the City*, loc. 73, Kindle.

3. Harvie Conn, ““The Kingdom of God and the City of Man” in *Discipling the City: A Comprehensive Approach to Urban Mission*, ed. Roger S. Greenway, 2nd Ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992).

4. Harvie Conn, “Genesis as Urban Prologue,” *Discipling the City: A Comprehensive Approach to Urban Mission*, ed. Roger S. Greenway, 2nd Ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992).

5. Harvie Conn & Manuel Ortiz, *Urban Ministry: The Kingdom, the City & The People of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001).

from the early church to the late twentieth century. Utilizing Richard Niebuhr's fivefold Christ and Culture framework, Conn presents an informative categorization of different theologians and their position on a Christ and City framework.

Conn's essay, "Genesis as Urban Prologue," is a biblical examination of the roots of the city in Genesis. Conn's argues that the city is God's idea and that right away in the garden of Eden, God's urban intent can be seen. Finally, Conn and Manuel Ortiz's *Urban Ministry* is a textbook on urban ministry, looking at the history of the city and in the Bible, and laying out a theology of the city as place, process, center, power and place of change and stability. His themes are echoed and developed by Keller, Um & Buzzard, as well as Sunquist.

#### **Tim Keller, *Center Church*<sup>6</sup>**

*Center Church* is Tim Keller's magnum opus and textbook for church ministry in the city, based on years of teaching and ministering in New York City. Divided into three sections: Gospel, City and Movement, Keller argues that the optimal church is positioned at the center of three spectrums: 1. The church must preach and practice a gospel that avoids both legalism and relativism. 2. The church must relate to the culture of the city in a way that is neither under-adapted (overly critical) nor over-adapted (overly accommodating). 3. The church must exist as a movement, i.e. neither too structured nor too fluid.

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6. Tim Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), Kindle.

Keller presents a wealth of biblical and historical perspectives to inform his readers; this text has been highly influential for this thesis-project. *Center Church* will be used as a foundation upon which other authors/writings will be compared and contrasted.

### **Mac Pier, *A Disruptive Gospel*<sup>7</sup>**

Mac Pier is the founder and CEO of MOVEMENT.ORG, which organizes Movement Day and consults upon Movement Day Expressions around the world. His book, *A Disruptive Gospel*, tells the story and some of the theological underpinnings of Movement Day, as well as other stories of how God is working in various global cities. Pier's underlying thesis is that "as leaders are increasingly present to one another, God is increasingly present to the city."<sup>8</sup>

### **Eric Swanson and Sam Williams, *To Transform a City*<sup>9</sup>**

Eric Swanson and Sam Williams are pastors in Boulder, CO, who are engaged in helping churches and city networks globally bring about spiritual and societal transformation. Their book *To Transform a City* is an excellent theological and practical primer for practitioners who seek to unite the "whole church" to minister with the "whole gospel" to transform the "whole city". On Conn's "Christ and Church" framework, Swanson & Williams operate from the "Christ transforming the city" perspective.

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7. Mac Pier, *A Disruptive Gospel: Stories and Strategies for Transforming Your City* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2016).

8. Pier, *Disruptive Gospel*, 47.

9. Eric Swanson & Sam Williams, *To Transform A City: Whole Church Whole Gospel Whole City* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010).

### **Stephen Um and Justin Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*<sup>10</sup>**

Stephen Um & Justin Buzzard are PCA pastors based in Boston and San Jose united by an appreciation for the city. *Why Cities Matter* convincingly lays out a sociological, philosophical and biblical basis for why cities do indeed matter and offers a vision for how the church and the gospel can minister in a city. Um & Buzzard are balanced in their approach to the city (reflecting Keller's theological vision for the city, by whom they are very much influenced<sup>11</sup>) in that they appreciate and critique the city. Um & Buzzard build on Keller's foundation, offering deeper insights into the strengths of a city, particularly in their exposition of the "clustered density" and "connective diversity" found in a city. Their biblical analysis of the city is also excellent in its clarity and elegance.

### Contributors to "City" Literature

#### **Jacques Ellul, *The Meaning of the City*<sup>12</sup>**

Jacques Ellul was a French philosopher and theologian. His book *The Meaning of the City* presents a "Christ against the City" view where the city represents humanity's rebellion against God. In contrast to Conn, Ellul sees the city as being in opposition to the garden. Ellul's view of the city is roundly considered overly negative by the other authors presented in this

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10. Stephen Um & Justin Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter: To God, the Culture, and the Church* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2013).

11. Um writes in the acknowledgments, "Tim Keller's fingerprints are all over this book." Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, p13.

12. Jacques Ellul, *The Meaning of the City* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970).

chapter, but presents an important counter-perspective or “Christ-against-the-City” perspective.

### **Ed Glaeser, *Triumph of the City*<sup>13</sup>**

Ed Glaeser is a Harvard economist and urban apologist. *Triumph of the City* is not written from a Christian perspective but offers fascinating insights into the global trend toward urbanization that challenge traditional and rural assumptions about the city,<sup>14</sup> and offers persuasive policy corrections (for example, “help poor people, not poor places”<sup>15</sup>). Glaeser offers a compelling argument for the natural strengths of a city, cogently arguing against various critiques of the city. Glaeser is not completely sanguine about the state of cities and offers potential policies to address issues such as urban poverty, educational disparities, and the problems of NIMBYism.<sup>16</sup> His efforts to address some of the problems of the city aside, if Glaeser were a Christian, he would be operating from the “Christ-for-the-City” perspective!

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13. Edward Glaeser, *Triumph of the City: How are Greatest Invention Makes Us Richer, Smarter, Greener, Healthier and Happier* (New York: Penguin Publishing Group, 2012), Kindle.

14. For example, Glaeser rebuts the assumption that cities are places which cause poverty. Instead, he argues that cities are places which attract poor people.

15. Glaeser, *Triumph of the City*, 255.

16. NIMBY is an acronym that means “not in my back yard”

### **Meredith Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview*<sup>17</sup>**

Meredith Kline was an Old Testament scholar and theologian who taught at Westminster Theological Seminary (1948-77), during which time, Harvie Conn was both a student and professor at WTS, and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (1965-93), which overlapped with David Currie, Tim Keller and Scott Sunquist's years as students at GCTS.<sup>18</sup> His coursework which was eventually published as *Kingdom Prologue* is cited by both Conn and Keller. In particular, his theology of the city drawn from the book of Genesis is clearly influential for both Conn, Keller and Sunquist, and through Conn and Keller, Um and Buzzard as well.

### **Joel Kotkin, *The City: A Global History*<sup>19</sup>**

Joel Kotkin is a secular journalist and urbanist. His book *The City: A Global History* outlines a global history of the city, and his analysis showing the religious or sacred roots of early cities has been very helpful for this thesis-project. His definition of the city as a place of worship, safety and commerce has been widely adopted by many of the Christian writers outlined in this chapter.

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17. Meredith Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview* (Overland Park: Two Age Press, 2000).

18. The author could not find Scott Sunquist's year of graduation from GCTS, but Sunquist cites Meredith Kline's lectures in *Understanding Mission*.

19. Joel Kotkin, *The City: A Global History* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2005).

### **Scott Sunquist, *Understanding Christian Mission*<sup>20</sup>**

Scott Sunquist is a missiologist and currently President of Gordon-Conwell Seminary. His text *Understanding Christian Mission* has an excellent chapter on urban mission, whereby he offers a concise and cogent biblical analysis of cities and how churches can best respond to the needs of the city. Sunquist notes that his ideas draw heavily from lectures/writings from Old Testament scholar Meredith Kline (who is not reviewed here) and Harvie Conn.<sup>21</sup>

### Contributors to “Gospel and City” Literature

#### **David Currie, “Ecclesiopolis”<sup>22</sup>**

In his essay, “Ecclesiapolis,” David Currie presents a historical perspective on the complex and dynamic relationship between the church and the city. Historically, did the church shape the city or did the city shape the church? Currie’s answer is that it happened both ways. His thesis is particularly germane to this thesis-project since one of the contentions of chapter two is that the church ought to utilize the strengths and innovations of the city. Currie’s historical presentation will be compared with Conn’s history later in this chapter.

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20. Scott Sunquist, *Understanding Christian Mission: Participation in Suffering and Glory* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013).

21 Cf. Footnote found Sunquist, *Understanding Christian Mission*, 345-346.

22. David A. Currie, “Ecclesiopolis,” in *Reaching for the New Jerusalem: A Biblical and Theological Framework for the City*, ed. Park, Seong Hyun, Spencer Aída Besançon, and William David Spencer (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2013).

### **H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ & Culture*<sup>23</sup>**

Niebuhr's classic text, *Christ & Culture*, has profound relevance for city gospel movements, in that the practitioner's theological position toward the city will greatly determine the practitioner's goals for ministry or even understanding of city gospel movement. Niebuhr's framework is critiqued and adapted by Conn and Keller in their writings.

### Contributors to "Movement" Literature

#### **Steve Addison, *Movements that Change the World*<sup>24</sup>**

Steve Addison's *Movements that Change the World* describes five characteristic keys of movements that change the world based on the story of St. Patrick and his missionary endeavors in Ireland and Britain. These five keys are "white hot faith"; commitment to the cause, contagious relationships, rapid mobilization and adaptive methods. These keys will be further discussed later in this chapter.

#### **David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*<sup>25</sup>**

David Garrison is a missiologist specializing in Islam and unreached people groups. His work, *Church Planting Movements*, looks at characteristics of global church planting movements (CPM) which he defines as, "a rapid multiplication of indigenous churches planting

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23. H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ & Culture* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1951).

24. Steve Addison, *Movements that Change the World: Five Keys to Spreading the Gospel*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), kindle.

25. David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements: How God is Redeeming a Lost World* (Monument: WIGTake, 2004), Kindle.

churches that sweeps through a people group or population segment".<sup>26</sup> Garrison goes on to describe ten characteristics found in every CPM, ten characteristics found in *most* CPM and seven deadly sins. While Garrison's focus is not cities nor gospel movements per se, his analysis can translate to the broader discussion of city gospel movement, of which church planting is a part.

### **Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*<sup>27</sup>**

Alan Hirsch is a missiologist and theologian whose work, *Forgotten Ways*, which seeks to recover and understand the "apostolic DNA" of the early church is germane to the discussion on Christian movements.

## **Literature on the City**

### **What is the City?**

The challenge in defining what a city is comes in finding one that has universal applicability. A definition of the city must cross historical and geographic boundaries. In chapter two, a definition indebted to the insights of Keller, Glaeser and Um, was offered of the city as essentially being human density.

Swanson & Williams do not believe that density or population size capture the full picture of a city and offer a definition from Tim Keller offered at a Q Conference in 2008: "A city

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26. Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, loc. 247, Kindle.

27. Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids: BrazosPress, 2006), Kindle.

is a walkable, shared, mixed-use, diverse area. It is a place of commerce, residence, culture, and politics.” Interestingly Keller does not offer this as his primary definition in *Center Church*, although he acknowledges that “some define” a city in this way.<sup>28</sup> Swanson & Williams appreciate this working definition for the city because it works for “just about any city you find yourself in”<sup>29</sup> This definition does work for Boston, but there are many cities for which the “walkable” part may be contested.

Joel Kotkin proposes a more philosophical definition in his history of the city, which was also adopted in this thesis-project’s theological framework, which is that cities are places of worship, safety, and commerce. This definition has been adopted and adapted by many of the writers in the city gospel movement space, including Keller, Um & Buzzard, Swanson and Sunquist who all cite Kotkin’s work.

### **The City as a Space of Worship**

As noted in chapter two, Kotkin argues that religious structures were the heart of ancient cities.<sup>30</sup> Building upon Kotkin’s argument, Sunquist believes that worship is *the* central tenet of the city. The only question is what the city will worship. A fallen city is still a place of worship, albeit false worship. For Sunquist, redeeming the city means redeeming the worship of the city.<sup>31</sup>

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28. Keller, *Center Church*, p137.

29. Swanson & Williams, *To Transform the City*, p26.

30. Kotkin, *The City*, 5-8.

31. Sunquist, *Understanding Mission*, 350.

Um & Buzzard agree, “Cities are built upon the things from which humanity attempts to derive its ultimate significance. Whether centered around a mosque or a financial district, a cathedral or an entertainment sector, all cities are built in honor of and pay homage to some type of ‘god’.”<sup>32</sup> Since all people are built to worship, Um & Buzzard note that world class cities are the largest religious communities in the world due to their population sizes. Quoting Al Barth, they note that people in cities “turn to false gods, such as power, fame, possessions, privilege, and comfort.”<sup>33</sup> For Um & Buzzard, the city poses a tremendous opportunity because city living fosters spiritual openness. They write, “Cities are centers of worship filled with people who worship, and all of these worshipers are very open to finding new objects to worship.”<sup>34</sup> It was this kind of openness they posit that provided the context for the rapid spread of the gospel in first century.<sup>35</sup>

Keller does not include worship in his primary definition of the city, which is interesting given his sometimes equation of sin with idolatry. Presumably, Keller does not equate the particular sin of the city as false worship (versus other places). Instead, Keller focuses on safety, diversity and creativity.

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32. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 31.

33. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 32.

34. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 32.

35. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 32.

## The City as a Place of Safety and Power

Kotkin's second defining characteristic of cities is that they must be places of safety. He notes that many cities arose as places of refuge from marauding nomads or the general lawlessness that characterized large portions of the world's history.<sup>36</sup> Conn & Ortiz links safety with power: "[The city's] walls marked it as protector...whether small or large the city-state was the anvil of civilization, the center of power."<sup>37</sup> Um & Buzzard agree: "the search for safety in a lawless world led people to band together to create structures that would keep them safe. Walls, militaries, laws, government, and commerce are important elements of a safe human society, and they were all developed by cities."<sup>38</sup> Successful cities are able to keep people safe. Keller agrees that cities are places of safety and stability.<sup>39</sup> He acknowledges that this may not be an intuitive idea for modern believers, since many believe modern cities to be places of high crime. Yet, he notes that the idea of higher crime being inevitable in cities is mistaken, citing the dramatic decline in crime in NYC.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, he argues "modern-day cities such as Hong Kong, Singapore, and Gaborone (in Botswana) have thrived because they have established themselves as bastions of the rule of law in disorderly parts of the world, thereby attracting a disproportionate amount of economic investment and human talent."<sup>41</sup> The recent experience

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36. Kotkin, *The City*, xx.

37. Conn & Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 35.

38. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 30.

39. Keller, *Center Church*, 135.

40. Keller, *Center Church*, 136.

41. Keller, *Center Church*, 136.

of Hong Kong may seem like a countervailing point, but may indeed prove his point. Cities thrive when they *are* places of refuge and begin to decline when they are not.

### **The City as a Place of Commerce**

Finally, Kotkin argues that sanctity and security alone cannot create a great city. While priests, soldiers and bureaucrats provide the prerequisites for urban success, they do not produce the economic wealth to sustain large populations over time. Rather, economic contributors (artisans, merchants and working people, etc.) end up the majority of the city's population and ultimately the primary shapers of the city.<sup>42</sup> Building upon this point, Sunquist writes, "Commercial activity is also the furnace for creativity and artistic expression; consequently we see that cities produce and attract culture makers: artisans, sculptors, poets, philosophers, and musicians."<sup>43</sup> Um & Buzzard also see the theme of culture emerging out of Kotkin's description of the city as a place for commerce.<sup>44</sup> They adopt Lesslie Newbigin's definition of culture as "the sum total of ways of living built up by a human community and transmitted from one generation to another."<sup>45</sup>

Keller breaks up this theme into two separate features of urban life: diversity and creativity/productivity. He writes, "the biblical understanding of a city also implies greater diversity, which is a natural result of density and safety" since minorities find cities a safe place

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42. Kotkin, *The City*, xx.

43. Sunquist, *Understanding Christian Mission*, 351.

44. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 31.

45. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, loc. 2445, Kindle.

to live.<sup>46</sup> Whether all cities are culturally and ethnically diverse may be debatable, but Keller makes the salient point that diversity does not just apply to the population but also in land-use. Keller writes that “human society requires several elements including, an economic order where people work and business transactions take place; a cultural order where people pursue scholarship, art and theater, and a political-legal order, where cases are decided and governing officials meet.”<sup>47</sup> Comparing these elements to components of a pizza, he argues that cities are a place where every neighborhood is a slice of pizza (mixed-use zones), unlike suburbs which are single-use zones.<sup>48</sup> While this may be overstated (and Keller admits these are generalized)<sup>49</sup>, and the line between where the city ends and the suburb begins can sometimes be blurry, it is true that the city has diversity in closer proximity than suburbs and rural areas.

Keller goes on to write,

The city features street life and marketplaces, bringing about more person-to-person interactions and exchanges in a day than are possible anywhere else. The more often people of the same profession come together, the more they stimulate new ideas and the faster these new ideas spread. The greater the supply of talent, the greater the productivity of that talent, and the demand for it follows. As a testimony to this fact, the purpose of modern conventions is connection — a place where people connect with expertise, peers, money, and other resources — and the best way to facilitate these connections is to create a temporary city! All the connections lead in the end to creativity — new alliances, ideas, art, and movements.<sup>50</sup>

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46. Keller, *Center Church*, 137.

47. Keller, *Center Church*, 137.

48. Keller, *Center Church*, 137.

49. Keller, *Center Church*, 136.

50. Keller, *Center City*, 137-138.

While Keller's primary point is not about conventions, his illustration speaks to the potential of conventions as "temporary cities" and the key strength being the potential for creativity. A convention or conference that stifles creativity has failed in its purpose.

Kotkin's definition of the city is intuitively appealing in its simplicity and descriptive eloquence, which may be why so many Christian thinkers have adopted his categories. To redeem the city means to redeem all three spaces. While Sunquist may be correct in that the ultimate goal is to redeem the worship of a city, it is insufficient to only address the sphere of worship. A city gospel movement must impact the spheres of security (or power) and commerce as well. Swanson writes, "Church leaders who want to engage in holistic, kingdom-minded ministry in and to the city must learn to recognize and engage deeply in all three spheres."<sup>51</sup> Sunquist agrees, and argues that these three spheres are often broken, but that

...[P]art of the answer to redemption for the city is usually found within the city. The resources, in terms of human capital and financial opportunity, are present to meet the needs of the poorest of the poor. What is missing is the connection; a moral and spiritual bridge is needed to connect the greatest needs of the world with the human actors who have the ability to be God's agents of reconciliation and redemption.<sup>52</sup>

The city is defined by these three spheres, and redemption can come from within the city. The potential of a Movement Day type expression lies in acting as a temporary city as leaders from all three spheres coming together to creatively address the needs of the city.

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51. Swanson, *To Transform the City*, 27.

52. Sunquist, *Understanding Christian Mission*, 354.

For Um & Buzzard, these three spheres or functions of the city are also precisely why the city is so important for Christian ministry. It is to that topic, this chapter turns.

### The Importance of the City (for Christian Ministry)

There is a growing contingent of practitioners who are highlighting the need for the church to address the city. Arguments for the importance of the city can be organized into the following categories: the power of urbanization and globalization, the needs of cities, and the potential of cities.<sup>53</sup>

#### **Urbanization and Globalization**

Keller is one of the most prominent Christian advocates for the city. He argues that the reason Paul and other Christian missionaries went to great cities was because the gospel could then spread regionally and globally from those cities, due to the transportation routes and multi-ethnicity of many of these cities.<sup>54</sup> Keller argues that cities are now even more important due to rapid urbanization (over 50 percent of the world's population is now urban compared to 5 percent two centuries ago), and also due to their growing influence (due to globalization).<sup>55</sup>

Swanson illustrates the phenomenon of urbanization with the example of China. He writes,

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53. These authors naturally include biblical reasons for the importance of the city, which can be seen as another category. These arguments will be treated in the next section on biblical perspectives on the city.

54. Keller, *Center Church*, 154.

55. Keller, *Center Church*, 154.

With the move toward a capital-driven economy in the past few years, China has seen between 90 million and 300 million people move from the hinterland into its burgeoning cities...To put things in perspective, this is now the largest migration in human history. To accommodate the unprecedented size of this migration—a movement that is fueling China's factories—China is now building new cities from scratch. "China has between 100 and 160 cities with populations of 1 million or more (America, by contrast, has nine)." <sup>56</sup>

One rhetorical device commonly used by the writers in this field is to talk about the rate of urbanization and to compare it to an appropriately sized city being born every week/month, etc.<sup>57</sup> So Pier writes that a new San Francisco or Singapore is birthed every month<sup>58</sup> and Keller writes, "one new Rio de Janeiro (ten million people) *every two months* [emphasis Keller's];"<sup>59</sup> Swanson states there are now 400 cities around the world with populations over one million. Hence, Swanson quotes Ray Bakke, "Missions is no longer across the ocean and geographically distant; it is across the street and is culturally distant, in our cities and in cities on all six continents. In reality we have moved from a world of about 200 nations to a new world of some 400 world-class cities."<sup>60</sup> In other words, cities are the new global mission field.

One potential challenge to urbanization is that as Tim Keller notes it is particularly young people who want to live in cities. He writes, "approximately 32 percent of Americans in the Millennial generation live in cities – and 88 percent of them want to."<sup>61</sup> As such, Keller and Pier

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56. Swanson, *To Transform a City*, 36.

57. This is an observation and not meant to be a critique.

58. Pier, *A Disruptive Gospel*, 21.

59. Keller, *Center Church*, 154.

60. Swanson, *To Transform a City*, 36.

61. Keller, *Center Church*, 158.

emphasize the importance of ministering to young people. However, globally and especially developed nations have aging populations. The percentage of young people is declining as a percentage of the total population, and by 2034, people aged 65 years and older will outnumber those under the age of 18 in the United States.<sup>62</sup> The impact of this trend is difficult to forecast vis-à-vis the future of the city.

Globalization/immigration is another major phenomenon. Citing Thomas Friedman and the technological revolution that has led to unprecedented mobility of people, ideas, and capital (aka the “flattening” of the world), Keller argues that globalization first connects cities to the world. While some predicted that the rise of technology would weaken cities since people connected by social networking and online communication would not want to pay the higher cost of living in a city, the opposite has happened. Digital networking has led to the urbanization of the rest of the world.<sup>63</sup>

Globalization also connects cities to cities. Keller argues that world cities are actually more connected to other world cities than to their own nations. He writes, “the elites of New York, London and Tokyo not only work for the same multinational companies, but they also graduate from common educational institutions, take vacations and buy homes in the same places, and share common social and cultural values.”<sup>64</sup> Global cities are not just connected via their elites, immigration has led populations in global cities to become tightly connected to

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62. “Older People Projected to Outnumber Children for First Time in U.S. History,” *Census.gov*, March 13, 2018, <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2018/cb18-41-population-projections.html>.

63. Keller, *Center Church*, 154.

64. Keller, *Center Church*, 155.

many other countries. Swanson illustrates the scale and scope of immigration dramatically: “Within the boroughs of New York is a Dominican city of 500,000, a West Indian city of 800,000, a Haitian city of 200,000 in Queens, two Chinatowns of over 100,000, 200,000 Jews, 40,000 Hindus, 150,000 Arabs and Middle Easterners.”<sup>65</sup>

As such, “global cities are portals to other global cities”.<sup>66</sup> Keller’s analysis may explain why Movement Day has become a global phenomenon, and indeed appears to have more momentum overseas than in the United States. New York City may be more connected to other global cities than cities within the United States. Since cities are connected to other cities, the values and vision of Movement Day are more easily adopted by other global cities than US based cities. This is an exciting idea, since this phenomenon might also mean that a gospel movement in a city would impact not just the local region, but other global cities as well.

### **The Needs of the City**

The demographic argument is a strong one. Increasingly people are in cities, and so increasingly the cities become important for Christian ministry. At the same time, the increase of people has also led to an increase in needs. Sunquist, for example, points to one side effect of rapid urbanization:

Such rapid growth has meant that cities cannot build infrastructures quickly enough to handle new urban dwellers—so vast numbers live in slums. There are now over one billion people who are living in slums worldwide, a staggering picture of a great human

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65. Swanson, *To Transform a City*, 37 citing Larry Christensen in Tony Carnes, “New York Hope,” *Christianity Today* (December 2004), 33.

66. Keller, *Center Church*, 155.

tragedy at our doorsteps. Unfortunately, according to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme [sic], that number may double to two billion by 2020.<sup>67</sup>

Writing in 1997, Ray Bakke saw other issues:

Now as we look at cities in the nineties in North America and elsewhere, we face five new urban realities: a crack cocaine epidemic, assault weapons, massive numbers of homeless children, HIV-AIDS, and what Time magazine has called "the browning of America."<sup>68</sup>...Children are suffering and dying in our cities. The elderly-now the fastest-growing group in society-seem to be getting in the way. The needs of the urban population are greater than ever.<sup>69</sup>

To be clear, Bakke is not advocating a needs-first motivation for urban ministry. He writes,

I've concluded that I'm not in the city because the city is a place of great needs, even though it is that. I'm here because God has done a work of grace in my life that compels me to share...Needs shape my priorities, of course, but are not the primary motives. If we are need-driven, we can become manipulated, even codependent on our ministries for identity, for security and, not the least of all, for funds.<sup>70</sup>

However, Bakke writes "God's hands were in the mud" (Gen 2:7), and he argues that since God cares to get his hands dirty in his creation, so Christians ought to be willing as well. If Glaeser, Keller, Um & Buzzard are correct, then the attractiveness of cities to poor people means that there will be larger populations of the poor in cities, and the city will naturally be a place where Christians will want to minister.

At the same time, Keller notes that evangelical Christians live disproportionately outside of cities. Keller identifies four groups of people that are best reached in the cities who must be

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67. Sunquist, *Understanding Christian Mission*, 344.

68. By this, Bakke means the trend that ethnic minorities are becoming the majority in US urban areas. He does not elaborate on this "reality" and the attending needs.

69. Bakke, *A Theology as Big as the City*, loc. 237-240, Kindle.

70. Bakke, *A Theology as Big as the City*, loc. 321-322, Kindle.

reached to fulfill the mission of the church: first, young people who are the future leaders of the church and who disproportionately prefer to live in cities; second, “the cultural elites”<sup>71</sup> who have disproportionate influence in business, publishing, media, the academy, and the arts; third, accessible “unreached” people groups who have immigrated into the city and are more open to the gospel; and fourth, the poor.<sup>72</sup> To the last point, Keller writes,

There is an important connection between reaching the urban elites and serving the poor of your city. First, an urban church’s work among the poor will be a significant mark of its validity. It is one of the “good deeds” that Scripture says will lead pagans to glorify God (Matt 5:16; 1 Pet 2:12). Similarly, once cultural elites are won to Christ, discipling them includes reorienting them to spend their wealth and power on the needs of the poor and the city instead of on themselves.<sup>73</sup>

### **The Potential of the City**

The characteristics of a city as a center of safety, commerce and worship, or in Um & Buzzard’s terms: power, culture and worship, mean that cities are naturally hubs of influence.<sup>74</sup> Globalization, urbanization and immigration has only increased the power and influence of the city. One of Um & Buzzard’s great contributions to this conversation is their highlighting two of a city’s great potential strengths: clustered density and connective diversity.<sup>75</sup>

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71. Keller notes that Christians often bemoan losing the culture wars but argues that this is the result of evangelical Christians living outside of the city, while a non-Christian minority living in the city exerts much more cultural influence.

72. Keller, *Center Church*, 160-161.

73. Keller, *Center Church*, 162.

74. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 29-37.

75. Um & Buzzard’s treatment of these concepts (clustered density and connective diversity) was introduced in chapter two but deserve to be explored in greater depth.

Cities are clusters of dense populations. Um & Buzzard point out that 42 percent of the state of New York chooses to live in New York City, which accounts for just 0.006 percent of the state's land.<sup>76</sup> They ask rhetorically, "Is population density a problem to be addressed? Or is it an asset that needs to be leveraged?"<sup>77</sup> What does leveraging density look like? Um & Buzzard argue that the primary reason people choose to live together in close proximity is that "regular, challenging face-to-face interactions with other people make us more creative, innovative, and productive...at least part of what makes us uniquely human is our ability to connect with one another, and we do that more often in cities than in any other setting."<sup>78</sup> Quite simply, "clustered talent in dense cities produces innovation."<sup>79</sup>

At the same time, Um & Buzzard argue that clustered density is not enough as the example of declining industrial cities in the Rust Belt demonstrate.<sup>80</sup> They write, "The one phenomenon guaranteed to stifle the power of density is homogeneity. In other words, if everyone in a city, does the same thing for work, thinks along the same lines, and lives relatively similar lives, no matter how densely clustered they may be, the city will lack the necessary innovational capital needed to sustain itself over the long haul."<sup>81</sup> Clustered density

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76. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 46.

77. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 46.

78. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 46.

79. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 47.

80. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 47.

81. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 48.

is insufficient. What is also needed is connected diversity, i.e. the diversity of the city must be connected to one another to spark innovation and productivity.

Keller calls this dynamic “agglomeration,” which are the benefits which can be reaped by living near people who are *like* you and *unlike* you (but can supplement you). Extending this argument, Keller argues that average Christians need the city because it will connect them to people who are *like* them, i.e. work in similar fields but are more talented and advanced. This will challenge Christians to do their best. At the same time, the gospel enables Christians to avoid the potential of sin to take this culture-forming intensity and turn it into hubris, envy and burnout.<sup>82</sup> Christians also need the city because they will be linked with many people who are *unlike* them, which will challenge their views and beliefs. Sin can turn the culture-forming diversity of the city and lead it to undermine prior commitments and worldviews. The gospel is needed to resist but also especially to love people who are different.<sup>83</sup>

Swanson adds a different angle: he argues that cities may have an even more transformational impact than the church. Quoting Scottish evangelists Henry Drummond, he writes,

“[T]he church with all its splendid equipment, the cloister with all its holy opportunity, are not the final instruments for fitting men for Heaven. The city, in many of its functions, is a greater church than the church. It is amid the whirr of its machinery and in the discipline of its life that the souls of men are really made. How great its opportunity is, we are few of us aware.”<sup>84</sup>

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82. Keller, *Center Church*, 167.

83. Keller, *Center Church*, 168.

84. Swanson, *To transform the City*, 31.

If Swanson and Drummond are correct, then churches interested in seeing societal transformation may be better advised to invest in the city.<sup>85</sup>

A key takeaway from Keller and Um & Buzzard's writings is this: the city is not just a place with needs to be met but holds great potential for good (and evil). As Sunquist noted above, the city often holds many of the resources that will be needed to tackle its problems. While the church must give the city appropriate attention through church planting and encouraging people to stay in the city,<sup>86</sup> perhaps it is also the case that the church in the city also has the resources it needs if it can be connected together? As argued in chapter two, the church can be thought of as clusters of density in the city. While individual local churches may be more homogenous, the overall church in the city is diverse. If diverse clustered densities in the church can be connected together, there may be the potential for kingdom innovation. In the city, Christians can be uniquely linked to Christians who are *like* and *unlike* them.<sup>87</sup>

Um & Buzzard compellingly ask, "Knowing what we know – that our world is growing increasingly urban, that cities are magnets for spiritually curious people, that cities set our world's cultural and liturgical agenda – should the shape of Christian ministry and cultural engagement in our day have a strategically urban focus?"<sup>88</sup>

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85. The author remembers Alan Platt, pastor of Doxa Deo Church in Praetoria, South Africa, saying, "In Africa, we have a saying: 'It takes a village to raise a child.' But we started asking, 'Who is raising the village?'"

86. For example, Bakke argues that a church is not properly tithing unless it tithes their human resources into cities and neighborhoods of need. Bakke, *A Theology as Big as the City*, loc. 412, Kindle.

87. One important passage for the author is Matthew 5:13-17. While perhaps not the best exegesis of the passage, the author believes that if Christians are salt and light in their context, then presumably God will place sufficient salt and light in the right context to bring about his work.

88. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 57.

## Biblical Perspectives on the City

In this section, seven theologian's treatment of scripture will be summarized: Jacques Ellul, Ray Bakke, Eric Swanson, Scott Sunquist, Tim Keller, Harvey Conn, and Stephen Um.

### **Jacques Ellul**

Jacques Ellul provides a very different (and perhaps needed) perspective on the city from the other thinkers surveyed in this thesis-project. Ellul's reading of scripture leads him to paint a very pessimistic portrait of the city. For Ellul, the city is the epitome of humanity's rebellion against God. Unlike the other authors who begin their biblical analysis of the city in Genesis 1, Ellul begins with Cain's city in Genesis 4. Ellul argues that Cain rejects God's grace and mark of protection (Gen 4:15) and chooses to build a city instead. He writes, "Cain is completely dissatisfied with the security granted to him by God, and so he searches out his own security."<sup>89</sup> Ellul finds great significance in that Cain names his city "*Enoch*," the word for "dedication" or "initiation," which Ellul contrasts with *Reshith* (beginning) in Genesis 1:1. Ellul writes, "Inauguration, as opposed to creation. Initiation, as opposed to the garden paradise. The city as opposed to Eden. It is certainly not unawares that Cain gave this name to his creation. Now he also is going to make the world over again."<sup>90</sup> For Ellul, Cain's decision

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89. Ellul, *The Meaning of the City*, 4.

90. Ellul, *The Meaning of the City*, 6.

epitomizes the human condition. Humanity rejects God and wants to build its own security.

Ellul finds this narrative throughout the history of the city. For Ellul, every city is Babylon:

All the cities of the world are brought together in her, she is the synthesis of them all (Dan 3 and 4; Rev 14 and 18)...Everything said about Babylon is in fact to be understood for the cities as a whole. As all the other cities, Babylon (representative of all the others) is at the hub of civilization. Business operates for the city, industry is developed in the city, ships ply the seas for the city, luxury and beauty blossom forth in the city, power rises and becomes great in the city. There everything is for sale...Babylon, Venice, Paris, New York – they are all the same city...<sup>91</sup>

Where other authors see the cultural mandate at work, God's purpose for culture and civilization (that has also and subsequently been marked by sin), Ellul only sees biblical condemnation. In the end, God in his grace, hears humanity's cries and ultimately gives them a heavenly city, but this is a future reality: "there is no use expecting a new Jerusalem on earth. Jerusalem will be God's creation."<sup>92</sup> Ellul is deeply pessimistic about any present attempt to redeem the city. There is "no hope for him of ever being able to use the city, of ever spiritualizing it. What could he do? ...He has already made her as spiritual as he could."<sup>93</sup>

From this author's perspective, Ellul takes very seriously the narrative of the Fall and humanity's sinfulness which is a needed counter to undue optimism in regard to the present-day prospects for the city. Yet, Ellul's analysis is, as Sunquist writes, "pessimistic in the extreme."<sup>94</sup>

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91. Ellul, *The Meaning of the City*, 20-21.

92. Ellul, *The Meaning of the City*, 20-21.

93. Ellul, *The Meaning of the City*, 169-170.

94. Sunquist, *Understanding Christian Mission*, 348.

### **Ray Bakke**

Bakke writes, “Ellul views Babylon as the archetype of evil in Scripture and concludes that all cities are evil. I personally think Ellul misread the data. The Bible has many other city case studies he could have used to correct his rather depressing view.”<sup>95</sup> Bakke presents those case studies for how and why Christians ought to be involved in ministering to the city in a series of brief reflections, writing for an audience he presumes might think like Jacques Ellul. Among these reflections, Bakke considers whether Sodom can be saved (with the presence of the godly, yes!);<sup>96</sup> finds laments for the city in the Psalms,<sup>97</sup> a hopeful vision for cities in Isaiah that Christians can work towards,<sup>98</sup> mission to the city in Jeremiah 29<sup>99</sup> and sees a role for outsiders to play a role in community development in Esther, Ezra and Nehemiah, who he calls the “three Persians.”<sup>100</sup> In all of these reflections, Bakke is realistic about the sin of the city, but hopeful about humanity’s role in redeeming the city.

### **Scott Sunquist**

For Sunquist, the Bible tells a tale of two cities: Babylon and Jerusalem. He writes, “Cities, theologically speaking, represent God’s mercy and presence, but they also represent all

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95. Bakke, *A Theology as Big as the City*, loc. 1761, Kindle.

96. Bakke, *A Theology as Big as the City*, loc. 334-409, Kindle.

97. Bakke, *A Theology as Big as the City*, loc. 692, Kindle.

98. Bakke, *A Theology as Big as the City*, loc. 743-766, Kindle.

99. Bakke, *A Theology as Big as the City*, loc. 779-812, Kindle.

100. Bakke, *A Theology as Big as the City*, loc. 1027, Kindle.

that is opposed to God's rule.”<sup>101</sup> Sunquist organizes his biblical analysis using a similar pattern to “basic salvific pattern of creation, fall, and redemption, [he sees] the city as sacred, evil and hopeful.”<sup>102</sup> First, the Bible shows that the city is sacred and part of God’s design.<sup>103</sup> Contra Ellul, he writes, “When Cain built a city, he was not continuing in sin but responding to the cultural mandate of ordering and naming,”<sup>104</sup> and he finds that “Jerusalem was the paradigmatic city, representing justice, truth, and mercy of God in all its dealings.” (346)

Second, the Bible reveals the city is also evil and fallen. Sunquist argues that the core of a fallen city is its worship. He writes, “This is seen from the very beginning, in the plain of Shinar, when arrogance reigned and the people sought to build a tower reaching to God. The sin of Babel was the worship of human pride (Gen. 11).”<sup>105</sup>

Finally, the Bible shows the City as hope. Sunquist looks at Hebrews 11:14-16 and Hebrews 13:14, arguing that the city is a future hope that both past and present saints look forward to. Interestingly, Sunquist does not include Hebrews 12:22, which states that the heavenly city is also something that believers have already come to. Sunquist sees in Revelation 21 that the city of God is centered on worship (only now there is no temple, God himself is present). True economic justice prevails and all who would prevent justice have been

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101. Sunquist, *Understanding Christian Mission*, 345.

102. Sunquist, *Understanding Christian Mission*, 349.

103. In his footnotes, Sunquist reveals his reliance on Meredith Kline’s *Kingdom Prologue* and Harvie Conn’s “Genesis as Urban Prologue.” As such, he is sharing the same body of theological influences as Keller, Um & Buzzard.

104. Sunquist, *Understanding Christian Mission*, 346.

105. Sunquist, *Understanding Christian Mission*, 348.

removed from the city of God. Finally, the city provides protection. A wall protects citizens from plagues, violence, and those who would oppress the heavenly city. It is a safe city.<sup>106</sup> In other words, God has redeemed the three spheres of the city.

### **Harvie Conn, Tim Keller, Meredith Kline and Stephen Um**

These four authors will be treated together since their views are very much aligned, with Kline's influence seen in Conn, Keller and Um's writings.<sup>107</sup> Of the three, Um might be the most optimistic in regards to the city.<sup>108</sup> Um & Buzzard's treatment of the scriptural record is also perhaps the most clear,<sup>109</sup> and as such most of the references in this section will be from Um & Buzzard. The general outline of scripture according to Conn is that God had an urban intention which humanity fails to achieve, but which Jesus ultimately fulfills.<sup>110</sup>

For all these authors, the cultural mandate in Genesis 1:26 was always intended to be an urban mandate.<sup>111</sup> Eden is a prototype of the city. As Um writes, "City building is not an accidental sociological development. City building is God's idea, invention, and intention."<sup>112</sup>

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106. Sunquist, *Understanding Christian Mission*, 350.

107. The Kline tree appears to be the following: Conn was a student and later colleague of Kline at WTS. Keller was a student of Kline at GCTS and was influenced by Conn as a colleague at WTS, and later influenced Um and Buzzard.

108. This is the author's impression from the tone of their writings and arguments and is hard to quantify.

109. The difference in tone and clarity might be due to the different audiences for whom Um, Keller and Conn are writing. Generally speaking, Um writes for lay Christians, Keller for pastors, and Conn for academics.

110. Conn & Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 85-115.

111. See also Kline's quote in chapter two.

112. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 65.

For Um & Buzzard, Eden was not a wild land, but a cultivated garden with walls, and may even have included buildings.<sup>113</sup> In other words, Eden starts urban. They argue that the images of the garden in Genesis become urban images in the rest of Scripture (e.g. Ps 46:4-5; Zech 14:8; Rev 21:2).<sup>114</sup> While Um agrees with Ellul that Cain was searching for security when he built his city, Um does not see this negatively, rather “Cain builds a city for the same reason that God will later instruct Israel to build cities, namely, as places of refuge and safety for sinners and murderers (Numbers 35; Joshua 20).”<sup>115</sup> Kline does not specifically mention Ellul, but dismisses the characterization of the first city “as an evil invention of ungodly fallen man” as “dialectical sleight of hand.”<sup>116</sup>

The Psalms are described as “painting a portrait of God as the ultimate urban dweller,” since his dwelling is in the city (Ps 46:4, 48:1); God is concerned with the welfare of the city (Ps 46:5); God will “love, protect, bless, build, and invest all of himself in the preservation and expansion of the city” (Ps 48:8, 12-13), and even neighboring villages and towns are glad because of the prosperity of the city (Ps 48:11).<sup>117</sup>

Keller and Um note that God loves the city of Nineveh (Jonah 4:11)<sup>118</sup> and that in Jeremiah 28-29, he calls his people neither to separate or assimilate but to pick a third option.

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113. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 60.

114. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 60; Conn & Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 87.

115. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 61.

116. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 163.

117. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 66.

118. Keller, *Center City*, 141; Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 67.

Um & Buzzard write, “God calls them to live as culturally distinct people in the heart of the city, responding to the surprising call to be salt and light and pursuing the common good by being the best citizens of their respective earthly cities.”<sup>119</sup> However, Conn and Um note that Israel failed to carry out this urban commitment,<sup>120 121</sup> and that ultimately God takes personal responsibility for the mission, “took on human flesh, and was born into the city” (Luke 2:11).<sup>122</sup>

Um & Buzzard note that Jesus was born in an urban context and his ultimate goal for his ministry was the city.<sup>123</sup> More profoundly, since the Old Testament reveals that God’s original intention for the city was that it would be the place where he dwelled with his people (c.f. Eden and the Temple), “in Jesus, God enters into an earthly city to dwell with his people once again.”<sup>124</sup> Jesus entered into Jerusalem to set himself up as the new temple, and to become the center of a new city, setting up a new community, a city on a hill (Matt 5:14), that will be gathered around Jesus and no longer centered on humanity and its idols.<sup>125</sup>

There is much to appreciate in Conn, Keller, Kline and Um’s treatment of scripture. While Conn and Um’s statement that the purpose of the incarnation was to fulfill God’s urban commission is initially shocking, there is profound beauty in this perspective. Since Revelation

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119. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 68.

120. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 69, Conn & Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 102.

121. Keller does not emphasize this point in *Center Church* as far as this author is aware.

122. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 70. See also Conn & Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 114.

123. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 70.

124. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 71.

125. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 71.

points to a city where God dwells with his people, then it can indeed be argued that the scriptures point to Jesus fulfilling this urban commission.

Um & Buzzard summarize the scriptures in this way:

From start to the finish, the Bible presents to us a God who is committed to providing a city in which he can dwell with his people. The extent to which he goes to build that city is shocking. The promise of that perfect, future city has, in an already/not-yet fashion, broken into our present lives. Having been captured by the gospel and made citizens of the heavenly city, we are now uniquely equipped to live, work, and play as salt and light in our respective cities.<sup>126</sup>

### **Eric Swanson**

Swanson does not devote a section of *To Transform a City* to give a biblical perspective on the city per se but focuses upon what the scriptures say about how the church can minister to and transform their cities. Swanson draws upon the passages like Isaiah 65:17-25, Revelation 11:15 and Jeremiah 29:7 to explain how and why transformation for the city can happen.<sup>127</sup> Swanson does not develop a biblical theology then for the city, but there is a strong assumption that the Bible reveals that the city is broken and that God's people are to work for its redemption. Swanson notes that the early church focused its ministry upon urban areas, and that Paul's goal (found in Romans 1:11-15) was to get to Rome – "the most powerful center of influence in the known world".<sup>128</sup> All the other authors listed in this section, with the exception of Ellul, agree that the book of Acts shows the importance of the city to the early church's mission.

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126. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 88.

127. Swanson, *To Transform the City*, 56.

128. Swanson, *To Transform the City*, 35.

## The Gospel and the City

### Niebuhr's Christ and Culture<sup>129</sup>

The authors presented in the section immediately above were ordered by their relative optimism toward the city, from most pessimistic to most optimistic, with regard to the city.<sup>130</sup> A more nuanced way to consider one's stance to the city can be drawn from Niebuhr's classic *Christ & Culture*, which considers five typologies: Christ Against Culture, Christ Of Culture, Christ Above Culture, Christ and Culture in Paradox, and Christ Transforming Culture. This typology can be adapted to a Christ & City typology, since cities are a representation of human culture. Niebuhr recognized the artificiality of his model in that many people do not fit into any one category and it should be noted that each of these types represent themes that can be found in scripture. However, Niebuhr's framework is helpful when considering city gospel movements since Niebuhr's framework illuminates one's paradigm for how the gospel (Christ) interacts with the city (Culture), which will then shape the kind of movement one is expecting.

Keller summarizes Niebuhr's model in this way:

1. Christ against culture: a *withdrawal* model of removing oneself from the culture into the community of the church.
2. Christ of culture: an *accommodationist* model that recognizes God at work in the culture and looks for ways to affirm this.
3. Christ above culture: a *synthetic* model that advocates supplementing and building on the good in the culture with Christ.

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129. Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, xlvi.

130. It is difficult to order these thinkers (with the exception of Ellul) and readers may disagree with the author's evaluation.

4. Christ and culture in paradox: a *dualistic* model that views Christians as citizens of two different realms, one sacred and one secular.
5. Christ transforming culture: a *conversionist* model that seeks to transform every part of culture with Christ.<sup>131</sup>

Niebuhr called the last three “median types”<sup>132</sup> which exist between the first two extremes.

Keller chooses to blend the second and third category into a single “relevance” model since they both have a very positive view of culture,<sup>133</sup> and posits four models: a Transformationist model, a Relevance model, a Counterculturalist model (Christ against) and a Two Kingdoms model (Christ and Culture in paradox).<sup>134</sup> Keller notes as well that within these models, different groups can have different strategies for engagement.<sup>135</sup> Keller believes there are two important questions to ask about culture: “Should we be pessimistic or optimistic about the possibility for cultural change? And is the current culture redeemable and good, or fundamentally fallen?”<sup>136</sup> Keller plots these models based on their answers to these two questions and offers a very helpful diagram with different models positioned along two axes: the models’ level of engagement with culture and the model’s view on common grace (see figure 2 below).

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131. Keller, *Center Church*, 193.

132. Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, xl ix.

133. Keller, *Center Church*, 193.

134. Keller, *Center Church*, 215.

135. Keller, *Center Church*, 196.

136. Keller, *Center Church*, 218.

Using this framework, it might be noticed that apart from Ellul, who has a Christ Against perspective, and Glaeser, who has a Christ For perspective,<sup>137</sup> the other writers are somewhere in the median. Um & Buzzard, Swanson and Bakke are in varying degrees in the Christ Transforming model, Pier shows tendencies towards a Christ Above (given his appreciation for secular insights into society), Um & Buzzard and Keller do their best to reside in the center, seeking to acknowledge the weaknesses of each model and somehow blending the best biblical and theological insights of each.

At the same time, this author is inclined to ultimately place most of these writers in the Transformationist camp, since there is a clear rhetoric and preference for city engagement, with a clear understanding of the fallenness of humanity (while still acknowledging common grace).<sup>138</sup> It is difficult to see how practitioners desiring a city gospel movement can operate from a Counterculturalist or Two Kingdoms perspective, since these two camps tend to underemphasize the possibility of present day societal transformation. A relevance model is also difficult (but not impossible) to bring about societal change in the name of Jesus. A practitioner seeking to engage other Christians in a collaborative effort must look for others operating in a Transformationist paradigm (as the low hanging fruit) and be able to understand, appreciate and challenge the perspective of others. Transformationists must also beware the weaknesses of their paradigm. Keller notes the following problems: Transformationism is often marked by an “underappreciation for the church” and “tends to be triumphalistic, self-

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137. Glaeser does not write from a Christian perspective, so this is a somewhat facile assignment.

138. If it is not evident to the reader, the author would also place himself in the Transformationist camp, so there may be some inherent biases at work.

righteous, and overconfident in its ability to both understand God's will for society and bring it about."<sup>139</sup>

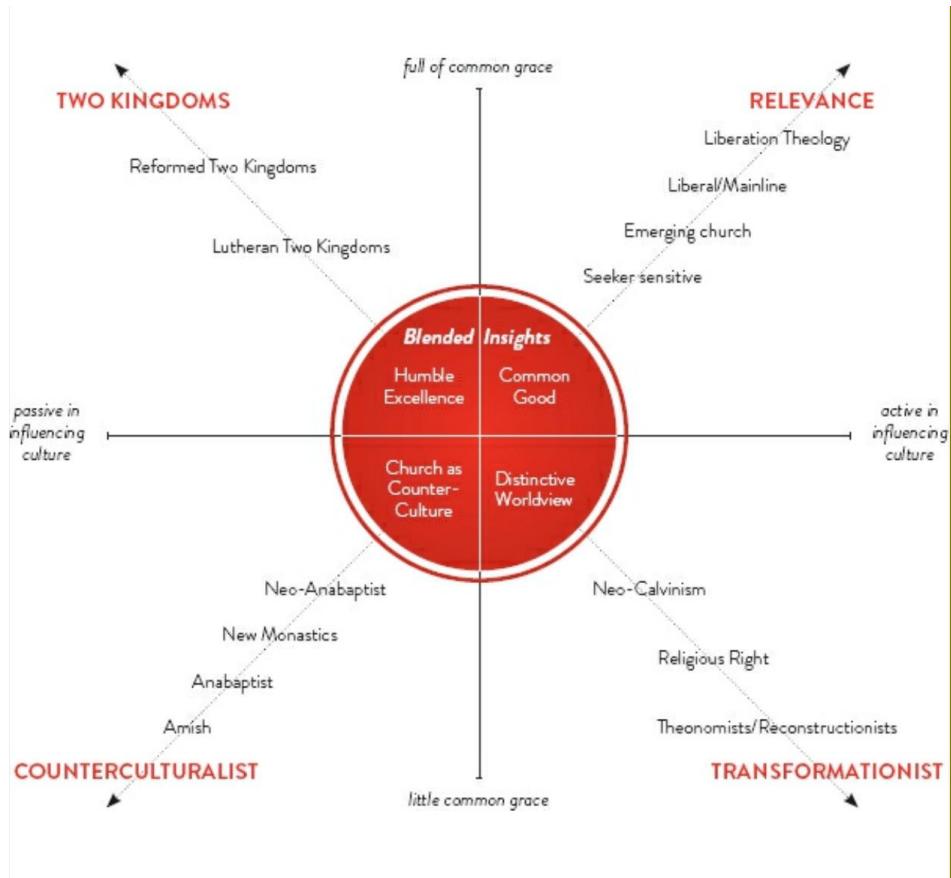


Figure 2. Tim Keller's Typology of Culture and Common Grace<sup>140</sup>

### Historical Perspectives

There are two ways to approach a history of the city: either through the lens of a theology of the city, or through the lens of the church's interactions with the city. In this section, two historians' approaches will be summarized.

139. Keller, *Center Church*, 198.

140. Keller, *Center Church*, 224.

## Harvey Conn

Harvie Conn's history of the city is found in his essay, "The Kingdom of God and the City of Man" where he outlines a history of theology. Using Niebuhr's framework, Conn catalogs how the theology of the city changed over time and critiques those theological positions. Conn marks four major periods of the city: 1. The Cosmopolis; 2. The Theopolis; 3. The Megalopolis; and 4. The Global city.

Conn evaluates prominent theologians in each of these time frames and analyzes their stance toward the city. For example, during the Cosmopolis era, Tertullian is assessed as "Christ-against-the-city" while gnostics are "Christ-of-the-city."<sup>141</sup>

In the Theopolis era, Augustine represents the "Christ-transforming-the-city" posture,<sup>142</sup> and is critiqued by Conn for bringing an authoritative institutional flavor to the church.<sup>143</sup> Aquinas represents the "Christ-above-the-city" posture and saw the city as being in need of divine amplification. Conn argues that while Aquinas sought to use a "both-and" approach, he never took seriously enough the gap between Christ and the city.<sup>144</sup> Aquinas's approached favored reason from natural law over scripture, and "left the world of the city relatively autonomous of the kingdom of God, except in a supplementary way."<sup>145</sup>

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141. Conn, "The Kingdom of God and the City of Man," 249-250.

142. Conn, "The Kingdom of God and the City of Man," 251.

143. Conn, "The Kingdom of God and the City of Man," 252.

144. Conn, "The Kingdom of God and the City of Man," 253.

145. Conn, "The Kingdom of God and the City of Man," 253-254.

Conn places the Reformation as an interlude between the theopolis and in the megalopolis. Conn writes, “Three models divided the Reformation perspective on the city.”<sup>146</sup> First is Luther’s two-kingdom theory, a dualism of Christ and the city in paradox.<sup>147</sup> Luther saw the culture of the city as deeply broken, but he was still required to live in it.<sup>148</sup> Second, Anabaptism returned to the Christ-against-the-city model, seeking to “repudiate the theopolitical heritage of Constantinianism.”<sup>149</sup> Calvin provides the third model: “Christ as transformer of the city.”<sup>150</sup> Drawing from Augustine, “he looked for the present permeation of all life in the city by the gospel.”<sup>151</sup> In the end, Conn critiques all three models:

The Reformation ultimately offered no brake on the increasing pressure of the secularization of the city. Anabaptism called for a new model of the kingdom of God, structured against the city. Luther left the city to the dictates of natural law and reasonableness. Calvin compromised his call for reforming by not breaking entirely with the Constantinian ecclesiology in which the church embraced all in a given locality.<sup>152</sup> In the megalopolis era, Albrecht Ritschl revives the Christ-of-the-city model, promoting “an idea of the kingdom of God shorn of its supernaturalism.”<sup>153</sup> Conn describes Ritschl as “the midwife of classic theological liberalism,” and lays the philosophical basis for Marxism and the

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146. Conn, “The Kingdom of God and the City of Man,” 257.

147. Conn, “The Kingdom of God and the City of Man,” 257.

148. Conn, “The Kingdom of God and the City of Man,” 257.

149. Conn, “The Kingdom of God and the City of Man,” 257-258.

150. Conn, “The Kingdom of God and the City of Man,” 258.

151. Conn, “The Kingdom of God and the City of Man,” 258.

152. Conn, “The Kingdom of God and the City of Man,” 259.

153. Conn, “The Kingdom of God and the City of Man,” 261.

social gospel.<sup>154</sup> Conn details how evangelicals also initially participated in social reform (e.g. Wilberforce), but were unable to deal with the secularism of industrialization and urbanization, leading eventually to anti-urbanism, racism and an abandonment of social reform.<sup>155</sup> Conn quotes,

Urban problems like substandard housing, poverty, unemployment, disease, and crime were too much for the churches with their limited resources to deal with effectively. Many of the faithful shook their heads in despair and concluded that there was little they could do about the wretched social conditions except pray and try to evangelize their neighbors. Added to this was the retreat from the inner city by established Protestant congregations, leaving many slum areas virtually devoid of churches.<sup>156</sup>

Conn does not explicitly state this, but his description of evangelicalism in the nineteenth century seems to be increasingly Christ-against-the-city. In reaction to liberalism and evangelicalism/neo-fundamentalism, a new model for understanding the city arises: neo-orthodoxy, which was a Christ-and-the-city-in-paradox model. Conn lists Kierkegaard, Barth, and Reinhold and Richard Niebuhr among theologians in this model.<sup>157</sup>

Finally, a plethora of models arise in the era of global cities, generally more optimistic toward the city. Conn writes, "within Protestant and Catholic circles, old perspectives on the city have reappeared, but this time with a darker hue. Despite the articulate protests of some within its ranks, the World Council of Churches, through the 1960s and 1970s, has revitalized

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154. Conn, "The Kingdom of God and the City of Man," 262.

155. Conn, "The Kingdom of God and the City of Man," 263-265.

156. Conn, "The Kingdom of God and the City of Man," 264-625.

157. Conn, "The Kingdom of God and the City of Man," 267-268.

something resembling the old Christ-of-the-city model.”<sup>158</sup> Liberation theologies also fit well with the Christ-of-the-city model.<sup>159</sup> Conn ends with a more hopeful tone, asking whether evangelicals are awakening to an increasingly Christ as transformer of the city model. He highlights Lausanne which “has welded a stronger consensus in the world church on the need for putting together the horizontal and vertical elements of the gospel,”<sup>160</sup> yet notes that there is continuing dissension due to the heritage of diverse models in the camp. Conn concludes by saying Roger Greenway is right when he says,

The biblical model is far larger than either the liberal social activists or the traditional fundamentalists imagine. It is a Gospel which includes winning disciples to Christ, establishing churches, and building a Christian community with all its facets and areas of concern. The whole city, from top to bottom, must be called to repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the full Gospel which requires the total renewal of man and his society, and it is the only Gospel which offers any genuine hope for today’s urban world.<sup>161</sup>

Conn’s critique of various historical positions toward the city is a reminder for practitioners to be continually self-reflective and to ask, is the whole gospel being preached and lived out? Conn’s desire to have a complete and balanced theology seems to be reflected in Keller whose center church philosophy seeks to be able to incorporate full height and breadth of the gospel.

**David Currie**

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158. Conn, “The Kingdom of God and the City of Man,” 270.

159. Conn, “The Kingdom of God and the City of Man,” 273.

160. Conn, “The Kingdom of God and the City of Man,” 275.

161. Conn, “The Kingdom of God and the City of Man,” 276.

In comparison to Conn, Currie is less critical and more neutral in tone as he explores the complex and dynamic relationship between *the church* and the city. In his history, Currie demonstrates over nearly two thousand years that the church and city mutually influenced one another (both positively and sometimes negatively) in a complex interrelationship for which he coins a new word to describe: Ecclesiapolis (ecclesia = church + polis = city).<sup>162</sup> This insight holds great value since it adds historical support to Keller's argument that the church can be in the center of the cultural models. The story of the church and city is one of intermittent themes of transformation, tension and influence.

This author would note that in an ideal world, church and city interactions ought to be mutual. If the city is the context, then a contextualization of the gospel would require that the church adapt to the city. At the same time, the gospel ought to influence and transform the city, which would then require a fresh contextualization of the gospel. Segments of the church will not always be able to adapt; church traditions will not always be able to keep up with change. For example, Currie cites the Salvation Army as an example of mutuality. William and Catherine Booth took the radical approach of turning a voluntary society (a social innovation based on the innovation of joint-stock companies) into a church.<sup>163</sup> This author would note that the Salvation Army was a radical contextualization of the gospel. However, the brass band which is a symbol of the Salvation Army is also a symbol for an innovation which did not further

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162. *Reaching for a New Jerusalem*, p38-39

163. Currie, "Ecclesiapolis", 51.

innovate. The brass band was wildly popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but the Salvation Army was slow to move to new musical forms in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Currie breaks up his history into a quadtych or four panels:<sup>164</sup>

1. 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> centuries AD: cosmopolitan cities of the Roman Empire accompanied the Gentile church. When the Roman Empire declined, urban life also declined for the next millennium.
2. 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries AD: commercial cities paralleled the Reformation.
3. 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries AD: industrial cities paralleled multiple seasons of mass revival
4. 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> centuries AD: global cities have paralleled the rise of indigenous and immigrant churches.

One striking feature of Currie's history is how technological innovations adopted by the church, and certain urban cultural characteristics enabled the gospel to flourish.

In the first panel, "Secure roads and shipping lanes [between urban centers] made it possible for missionaries to travel easily."<sup>165</sup> The cosmopolitan approach to religion allowed for choice in a citizen's religion which created social space for the Gentile church to emerge. These features facilitated the development of a primarily urban Christian expression.<sup>166</sup> As the Gentile church grew, cities were transformed. For example, lethal combat was subtracted from urban arenas and basilicas were added to urban skylines.<sup>167</sup>

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164. Currie, "Ecclesiopolis", 39.

165. Currie, "Ecclesiopolis", 42.

166. Currie, "Ecclesiopolis", 43.

167. Currie, "Ecclesiopolis", 44.

In the second panel, the church helped fill the authority vacuum left by the decline of the Roman empire, and the bishop in his cathedral in the city counterbalanced the lord in his castle in the country.<sup>168</sup> However, the church in general was slow to adapt to revival in town life in the eleventh century.<sup>169</sup> Major urban development began in the sixteenth century with the rise of commercial cities.<sup>170</sup> The invention of the printing press (which of course facilitated the printing of bibles)<sup>171</sup> created a broader market for books and ideas.<sup>172</sup> Transportation became safer and universities were developed. Commercial cities developed, creating new urban elites (merchants, bankers and artisans) who resented the church's hierarchy, and open to changes that the Reformation offered.<sup>173</sup>

In the third panel, industrialization leads to industrial cities, rising standards of living, but then also an urban population explosion and subsequent, social problems, "the slum conditions explored in the novels of Charles Dickens."<sup>174</sup> The rise of joint-stock companies made industrialization possible due to the pooling of capital, which reflected a "more democratic, bottom-up structure."<sup>175</sup> Currie writes, "Successive waves of mass revivals in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries embodied an industrial approach to religion. George

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168. Currie, "Ecclesiopolis", 44.

169. Currie, "Ecclesiopolis", 45.

170. Currie, "Ecclesiopolis", 45.

171. Currie does not say this explicitly, but it may be implied.

172. Currie, "Ecclesiopolis", 45-46.

173. Currie, "Ecclesiopolis", 47.

174. Currie, "Ecclesiopolis", 48.

175. Currie, "Ecclesiopolis", 48.

Whitefield...invented the role of the international, itinerant evangelist."<sup>176</sup> This was possible due to improvements in transportation (e.g. the railroad), the urban printing press and adopting traveling salesman strategies.<sup>177</sup> Volunteer societies mimicked the joint-stock company and "provided the practical support to make the spiritual means of revival available on a broad scale."<sup>178</sup> Churches in turn incorporated aspects of the volunteer society into their organizational structures.<sup>179</sup> Increased lay involvement also allowed for the rise of Wesley's circuit riders and the businessmen's mid-day prayer in New York City.

In the last panel, Currie details the rise of global cities as global population movements grew cities, made cities and countries more interconnected to each other, resulting in the rise of ethnic church planting. While Currie does not address specific technological innovations as in the first three panels, there is value in exploring the question as to how the church can adapt to and adopt modern technological and social innovations, and urban characteristics, to contextualize and advance the gospel. For example, the internet has dramatically opened up avenues for communication. Just as the joint-stock company had societal and ecclesiological implications, might new forms of enterprise, such as "platform" companies (e.g. Amazon, AirBnB, Uber, etc.) lead to new forms of ecclesiological structures? From this author's

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176. Currie, "Ecclesiopolis", 49.

177. Currie, "Ecclesiopolis", 49.

178. Currie, "Ecclesiopolis", 49.

179. Currie, "Ecclesiopolis", 50.

observations, Mac Pier, Rob Kelly and other Christian “city network leaders” are among those at the forefront of exploring the answers to this question.<sup>180</sup>

### Church and City

This section will focus upon Keller, Um & Buzzard, and Swanson’s contributions since their writings are the most focused on how the church can be part of a city gospel movement. There are some common themes across the writers surveyed in their view of how the gospel can impact cities through churches. These themes include: the importance of individual transformation, knowing the city, and wholistic ministry.

#### **The Importance of Individual Gospel Transformation**

The writers surveyed agree that societal transformation begins as the gospel transforms individuals. Keller writes for example, “Gospel renewal in the church spreads through renewed individuals talking informally to others.”<sup>181</sup> While Swanson warns about the insufficiency of focusing upon individual conversion, he writes,

Community transformation begins with and is led by people who themselves are being transformed. We should never underestimate how important an individual believer with a changed heart can be and how much impact he or she can have upon the world. Jeremiah 5:1 reminds us that it takes only one person to affect the outcome of a city. The highest level of transformation (that with the most measurable change) occurs at the lowest and most basic level—that of the individual follower of Christ. This individual transformation occurs when a person comes to know Jesus Christ in a personal way and begins to live under his lordship: “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has

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180. Mac Pier and Rob Kelly are interviewed as part of thesis-project.

181. Keller, *Center Church*, 75.

gone, the new has come!” (2 Cor 5:17). Conversion is the prerequisite to transformation.<sup>182</sup>

Looking at Isaiah 61:1-6, Swanson sees six steps in the process of transformation.<sup>183</sup>

1. Transformation begins with one person who is yielded to the Spirit of the Lord
2. Transformation comes through proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.
3. Transformation begins as people are transformed.
4. Transformed people want to transform their communities.
5. Transformation occurs when the work is taken over by others.
6. Transformation is recognized by how the city identifies your role.

Steps 5 and 6 will be further addressed when looking at Movement dynamics, but this outline shows how Swanson sees city transformation begins with individual transformation.

Um & Buzzard agree. Writing about the importance of proclaiming the gospel, they write, “[T]he effect of this gospel preaching...will be the transformation of men and women such that we begin to love our neighbor where once we loved only ourselves.”<sup>184</sup>

While there may be a Western bias toward individualism here, the bigger point is that the gospel does not impact societies beginning with church programs, but through the genuine transformation of people.

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182. Swanson, *To Transform a City*, 48.

183. Swanson, *To Transform a City*, 53-54.

184. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 93.

## The Importance of Knowing the City

In order for the gospel to impact a city, the gospel needs to be specifically contextualized for that city. Um & Buzzard write, “We must understand the unique personalities of our cities in order to contextualize the gospel and best serve our cities.”<sup>185</sup>

They suggest asking five questions:

1. What is your city’s history (the roots help to understand the current makeup)?<sup>186</sup>
2. What are your city’s values (the core DNA)?<sup>187</sup>
3. What are your city’s dreams (to get a sense of potential idols)?<sup>188</sup>
4. What are your city’s fears (so that the gospel can bring comfort to specific vulnerabilities)?<sup>189</sup>
5. What is your city’s ethos (shaped by the city’s unique geography, history and climate)?<sup>190</sup>

These five questions are designed to help Christians understand the “story line” of their particular city. Um & Buzzard write, “When you put together the history, values, dreams, fears and ethos of a city, you can discern the overarching story line that drives how a city operates and how its inhabitants live.”<sup>191</sup> Once Christians know the story of the city, they can challenge the city’s story (and its idols) and retell the city’s story with the gospel.<sup>192</sup> Since for Um &

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185. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 99.

186. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 102.

187. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 103.

188. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 104.

189. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 104.

190. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 105.

191. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 113.

192. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 111.

Buzzard, the city is a center of worship (albeit often false worship), the goal of this city exegesis is to expose the idols of the city, and address the idol with the true gospel.

Keller similarly has three steps: first, enter and adapt to the culture; second, challenge and confront culture; and finally, appeal to and console the culture (with the story of Jesus). In the end, Keller, Um & Buzzard believe the gospel of Jesus's substitutionary sacrifice can appeal to every story. One just needs to apply it in the right way.

### **The Importance of Wholistic Ministry**

Keller, Um & Buzzard and Swanson have a partiality toward complex ministry.<sup>193</sup> Given that the city is a complex system of inter-related systems, ministry to the city must be able to address these complexities. Their writings reveal two different approaches.

### **Um & Buzzard; Keller – Five Key Elements**

Um & Buzzard present five key elements to ministering in the city.<sup>194</sup> First, the gospel needs to be at the center.<sup>195</sup> By this Um & Buzzard mean that "Jesus is the substitutionary savior who inexplicably gives himself for sinners while assuaging God's wrath and who ultimately fulfills the deepest longings of the human heart."<sup>196</sup> Second, a new gospel

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193. For Keller, a "bias for complex evangelism" is one of the vital features of a church for the city, Keller, *Center Church*, 176.

194. Um & Buzzard have been chosen to represent the Keller school of thought here as they present an excellent summary in accordance with their appreciation for and familiarity with Keller's work.

195. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 132.

196. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 132.

community that is attractive and compelling will be one of the greatest apologetics for the gospel. Third, churches need to “balance” among four ministry fronts:<sup>197</sup>

1. Evangelistic worship (connecting people to God)
2. Community and discipleship (connect people to one another)
3. Social justice and mercy (connect people to the city)
4. The Integration of faith and work (“one of the good gifts that a church can give to its city is a significant number of gospel-driven individuals in every field or discipline”).

Fourth, there must be reproduction of churches (i.e. church planting) to keep up with the explosive population growth of the city.<sup>198</sup> Finally, they counsel “patience, hard work and prayer”, writing, “It takes time for people to change. It takes even longer for cities to change.

The ministry we are calling for mainly involves a lot of hard work and prayer.”<sup>199</sup> (147) – speaks against the quick, explosive type of movements that we read about in Addison/Garrison.

#### Swanson – Whole Church Whole Gospel Whole City

Swanson adopts the language of the Lausanne Movement: “Transformation can only occur when ‘the whole church takes the whole gospel to the whole city.’”<sup>200</sup>

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197. Keller, *Center Church*, 291; Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 145.

198. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 146.

199. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 147

200. Swanson, *To Transform a City*, 99-100.

**The Whole Church.** It might be noted that Swanson has the most developed theology of unity among the writers in this chapter.<sup>201</sup> Since Paul wrote his letters to *the church* of the city (even though there were likely multiple house churches meeting in a city), Swanson argues “the church is really only *one* church in a city made up of many different congregations that meet at various locations and times.”<sup>202</sup> Swanson notes that unity does not require a uniformity of doctrine, programming or in the style of prayer/worship. Rather it is a unity that comes from being part of the family of God; a unity that comes as pastors intentionally fellowship; and finally, a unity of purpose.<sup>203</sup> Note, each of these levels of unity go deeper in intentionality, and for Swanson, purpose is the ultimate goal.

Swanson writes, “unity is a means and not an end. This helps us understand why most ecumenical movements fail. If unity is our primary goal, we will never arrive at our destination.”<sup>204</sup> He also notes the difficulty of sustaining a unity of fellowship over an extended period of time: “Unless congregations share something in common with each other that is significant enough to motivate them to ‘accept one another’ (Rom 15:7), their embrace of unity will be short-lived.”<sup>205</sup> In addition, Swanson observes that most leaders are naturally biased toward action: “Few will attend more than a couple of prayer meetings if they sense that these

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201. This is not to imply that a theology of unity is lacking in the other writers, and certainly does not give enough credit to Ray Bakke.

202. Swanson, *To Transform a City*, 100.

203. Swanson, *To Transform a City*, 103-106.

204. Swanson, *To Transform a City*, 107.

205. Swanson, *To Transform a City*, 108.

gatherings lack a clear purpose.”<sup>206</sup> Swanson asks a challenging and helpful question: “what could the [united] church do together that any church could not by itself?”<sup>207</sup>

Swanson makes two more suggestions that this author found very helpful for the Boston context. First, he writes, “City transformation won’t *include* all churches, but it should not *exclude* any churches.”<sup>208</sup> This is a helpful application of his earlier point that unity is a means not an end. Second, Swanson observes that “city transformation movements certainly don’t require the active participation of megachurch pastors, but it sure helps to have them in the mix,”<sup>209</sup> since they help increase the visionary capacity of the movement, and “because city transformation movements will involve the engagement of domain leaders from government, business, media, and education, these domain leaders will likely want to meet the most influential leaders of the faith community.”<sup>210</sup>

**The whole gospel.** By this, Swanson means “good news and good deeds working together;” “proclamation and demonstration;” “justification and justice.”<sup>211</sup> Swanson notes that churches can operate in four different quadrants (see figure 3). A church that cares about the city will be growing more externally focused in both proclamation and demonstration (i.e. the upper right quadrant) so that the church is acting as both salt and light. One nitpick: the

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206. Swanson, *To Transform a City*, 109. This observation resonates with this author’s experience.

207. Swanson, *To Transform a City*, 120.

208. Swanson, *To Transform a City*, 110.

209. Swanson, *To Transform a City*, 121.

210. Swanson, *To Transform a City*, 121.

211. Swanson, *To Transform a City*, 128-129.

placement of the “salt but not light” and “light but not salt” categories in Swanson’s chart is disputable in this author’s view, since exegetically it makes more sense to assign salt to good deeds and light to good news.

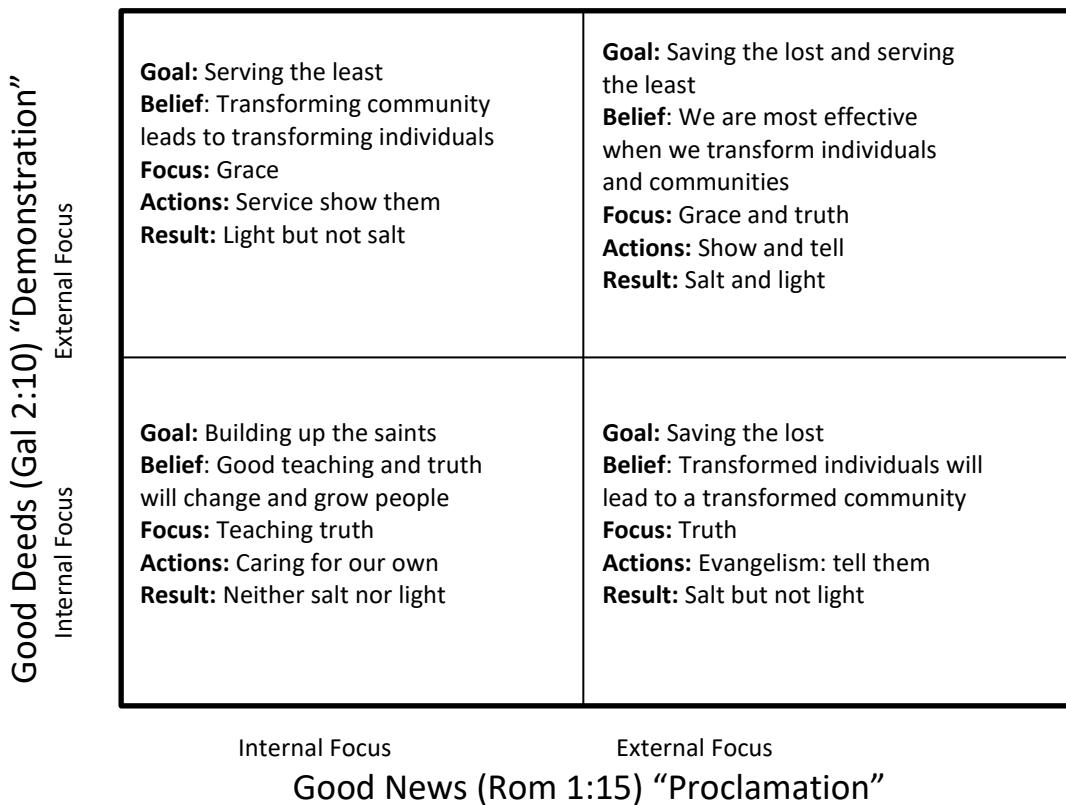


Figure 3. Eric Swanson's Externally Focused Church Paradigm<sup>212</sup>

## Swanson quotes Keller,

The ministry of mercy is a dynamic witness to those with whom you share the gospel, because it builds a “plausibility structure” for our message. Most Christians in evangelism seek only to make the gospel credible, to make it cogent and persuasive intellectually. But people believe in a message mostly for non-rational reasons. A belief

212. Swanson, *To Transform a City*, 129.

appears convincing to the degree that it is supported by a consistent, loving group or community.<sup>213</sup>

Swanson, Um & Buzzard call practitioners to rethink “the thickness of the gospel.”<sup>214</sup> By this, Um & Buzzard mean, “an understanding of how the gospel affects all of life.”<sup>215</sup> Swanson specifies: “The gospel we share should address not only the spiritual consequences of our sin and rebellion, but also the social and economic consequences.”<sup>216</sup> From this “thick” understanding, Um & Buzzard emphasize the importance of integrating faith and work,<sup>217</sup> while Swanson suggests there are many non-believers who resonate with part of the story that the world is broken and want to be part of the solution. Instead of writing off the people, Christians have an opportunity “to help them connect their story to God’s bigger story of the kingdom and show them how their passion fits in with God’s bigger plan for our world.”<sup>218</sup>

While there is much to appreciate about Swanson, Um & Buzzard, and Keller’s call to a richer more holistic gospel, in this author’s view, what is missing in their perspectives is the concept of spiritual warfare, and the power dynamics of the kingdom (i.e. the Holy Spirit). As explored in chapter two, Jesus demonstrated the kingdom with acts of power, healing and

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213. Swanson, *To Transform a City*, 132.

214. Swanson, *To Transform a City*, 133.

215. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 145.

216. Swanson, *To Transform a City*, 135.

217. Um & Buzzard, *Why Cities Matter*, 145.

218. Swanson, *To Transform a City*, 136.

delivering people of evil spirits. The kingdom of God contends not only against the kingdoms of people, but the kingdom of the enemy. A “whole gospel” might include this kingdom dynamic.

**Whole City.** Swanson calls for the whole church to minister to the whole city, by which he means, the private, public and social sectors of the city. Swanson also cites Bill Bright and Loren Cunningham’s “Seven Mountains of Influence”: education, arts/entertainment, government, religion, family, media, and business.<sup>219</sup> Swanson channels Abraham Kuyper<sup>220</sup> in asking,

Imagine what it would be like if we had a theology, a vision, leaders, and a concrete example of kingdom transformation operating in every domain of society in every community. What if there were spiritual and transformational movements across every domain in the city? Would that not become a catalyst for change? What if the leaders in each domain were able to work together with leaders of other domains to take on the big problems of a community?<sup>221</sup>

Swanson presents here a vision for collaboration between leaders, believers and non-believers, to tackle the problems of society. Swanson celebrates the importance of every believer doing kingdom work in the domains to which they have been called.<sup>222</sup>

Swanson devotes a full and very helpful chapter to the question of how to partner with others. Two suggestions will be highlighted. First, Swanson suggests operating with centered set thinking rather than bounded set thinking. In other words, Christians should ask, “Do you

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219. Swanson, *To Transform a City*, 149-150.

220. Abraham Kuyper’s theology of “sphere sovereignty” put forward the view that God was sovereign in every sphere of society, and that Christians could seek his will for that specific sphere. This author agrees with this perspective.

221. Swanson, *To Transform a City*, 163-164.

222. Swanson, *To Transform a City*, 153.

care about what I care about?" rather than "Do you believe what I believe?"<sup>223</sup> This will enable the church to know who (including non-believers) it can work with. Second, Swanson suggests limiting non-Christian partners to those who are "morally positive and spiritually neutral." In other words, "if a group is not blatantly against us, we should consider them for us, and move forward with the work of the kingdom."<sup>224</sup>

## **Movements**

In this section, five writers will be considered: Addison, Garrison, Hirsch, Swanson and Keller. In this section, each writer's perspective on movements will be summarized. As these writers are surveyed, their understanding about how quickly and how organized (or not) a movement has to be, will be contrasted.

### Steve Addison

Beginning with St. Patrick, Addison surveys various movements over history and identifies five characteristic keys of movements that change the world. These five keys are:

1. White hot faith. Movements require men and women who encounter the living God and surrender in loving obedience and are passionate about his call. Nothing happens without a deep dependence upon God.<sup>225</sup>

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223. Swanson, *To Transform a City*, 180.

224. Swanson, *To Transform a City*, 182.

225. Addison, *Movements that Change the World*, 58.

2. Commitment to a Cause. Addison writes, “People who change the world live in alignment with their deeply held beliefs. When people stop caring, movements cease to exist.”<sup>226</sup>
3. Contagious Relationships. Patrick’s strategy was not just to reach individuals but whole relational networks.<sup>227</sup> When movements spread rapidly, they do so through pre-existing networks of relationships. In support of this observation, Rodney Stark cites numerous studies on conversion which “confirm that social networks are the basic mechanism through which conversion takes place.”<sup>228</sup>
4. Rapid Mobilization. Patrick grew leaders from his converts and taught them to follow his example. Missionary movements spread through the efforts of ordinary people, i.e. non-professionals who are not dependent on external funding and are not strictly controlled. Converts immediately share their faith and make other disciples. Key leaders model effective ministry and recruit, deploy and do on-the-job training with workers.<sup>229</sup>
5. Adaptive methods. Celtic monasticism was adaptable, flexible and transferable in contrast to the static, rigid and anchored nature of the Roman church. Patrick communicated the gospel in ways that affirmed the best of Celtic culture. Addison writes, “The most effective movements are prepared to change everything about themselves except their core beliefs.”<sup>230</sup>

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226. Addison, *Movements that Change the World*, 27.

227. Addison, *Movements that Change the World*, 27.

228. Stark, *Cities of God*, 12.

229. Addison, *Movements that Change the World*, 27.

230. Addison, *Movements that Change the World*, 27.

For Addison, movements are rapid, layperson, relationally driven and flexible in its methods.

### David Garrison

David Garrison defines church planting movements (CPM) as “a rapid multiplication of indigenous churches planting churches that sweeps through a people group or population segment”.<sup>231</sup> There are five critical elements to this definition which are helpful to consider: (1) rapid (i.e. faster than you think possible); (2) multiplication (not addition); (3) indigenous (not foreigner or outsider led); (4) Churches planting churches (not individuals) and (5) through a people group or population segment.

Through surveying various church planting movements, Garrison found ten universal elements at work in every church planting movement<sup>232</sup>:

1. Extraordinary prayer
2. Abundant Evangelism (through indigenous and thus already contextualized messengers<sup>233</sup>)
3. Intentional Planting of Reproducing Churches (“If you want to see reproducing churches planted, you must set out to plant reproducing churches<sup>234</sup>”)
4. The Authority of God’s Word
5. Local Leadership (“keep foreigners out of the spotlight”<sup>235</sup>)

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231. Garrison, loc. 247

232. Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, loc. 2617, Kindle.

233. Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, loc. 2761, Kindle.

234. Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, loc. 2753, Kindle.

235. Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, loc. 2849, Kindle.

6. Lay Leadership
7. House Churches
8. Church planting churches
9. Rapid Reproduction (beyond the control of the missionary)
10. Healthy Churches

How does this translate to city gospel movement? Keller, Um & Buzzard highlight church planting as a critical component of city gospel ministry. Garrison is clearly on the side of rapid/explosive growth, less organization and more lay leadership. While this may work in a rural regional basis, a city movement may need more structured leadership.

Alan Hirsch

In *The Forgotten Ways*, Alan Hirsch seeks an answer to the question of how the early church grew from a small movement to the most significant religious force in the Roman Empire in two centuries. Interestingly, unlike Steve Addison or David Garrison, Hirsch arrives at his answer not through historical study, but through his particular reading of scripture and observations from his experience within the missional church. Hirsch's answer is "Apostolic Genius" which he describes as the "the built-in life force and guiding mechanism of God's people."<sup>236</sup> Hirsch believes that the modern church has mostly lost (or forgotten) this Apostolic Genius and the recovery of the same will allow again for remarkable things to happen.

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236. Hirsch, *Forgotten Ways*, 18.

To this end, Hirsch outlines the missional DNA (“mDNA”) of Apostolic Genius. Apostolic Genius He finds six necessary elements.<sup>237</sup>

1. Jesus Is Lord. Since the goal is the promulgation of a Christian movement, the Lordship of Jesus is the natural and necessary beginning point.
2. Disciple Making. Hirsch points out phenomenal movements never move beyond “mere disciple making”. Creating authentic followers of Jesus is the goal.
3. Missional-Incarnational Impulse. Hirsch contrasts the evangelistic-attractional impulse (that typifies most churches), which draws people inward to the church, with the missional-incarnational impulse, which moves the church outward.
4. Apostolic Environment. Hirsch argues for a revival of the APEPT giftings (Eph 4:11)
5. Organic Systems. The church needs to be made simple enough for anyone to run.
6. Communitas, Not Community. For Hirsch, *communitas* is the community on mission. He argues that ecclesiology ought to arise out of missiology, which comes out of Christology.

Hirsch’s particular contribution to this conversation on movements is his belief in the critical role of apostolic leadership. Addison and Garrison also focus on particular apostolic figures, e.g. St. Patrick. However, Hirsch gives language to consider these figures’ particular roles. Hirsch’s description of the apostolic role is helpful: “the apostolic role is responsible and gifted for the extension of Christianity.”<sup>238</sup> The apostle is “the custodian of Apostolic Genius and of the gospel itself.”<sup>239</sup> As such, he/she is the person who imparts, embeds and maintains the

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237. Hirsch, *Forgotten Ways*, 23.

238. Hirsch, *Forgotten Ways*, 157.

239. Hirsch, *Forgotten Ways*, 160.

missional DNA to the movement.

Eric Swanson

Swanson does not use the language of apostolic leadership, but he agrees with Hirsch on the importance of strategic leadership. He writes that movements need at least one person who “wakes up every day thinking about the city...about how he or she can catalyze the churches of the city to work with leaders in other domains to transform the city. Where there is a dedicated leader – a champion – the city movement thrives. Without dedicated leaders, city movements flounder.”<sup>240</sup>

Swanson’s strength is that he blends theory with practical advice. He offers one model for starting a transformation movement<sup>241</sup>:

1. Define the geographical region.
2. Identify the “anchor church” pastors in those regions.
3. Gather the anchor church pastors together to consider the question, “what could we accomplish together that we could not alone?”
4. Develop personal pastoral relationships by praying, planning and playing together.
5. Partner to address a community need.
6. Plan a community catalytic event to stimulate and inspire collaboration.

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240. Swanson, *To Transform a City*, 173.

241. Swanson, *To Transform a City*, 113-114.

7. Celebrate regularly with your congregation what God is doing in the community through the body of Christ.
8. Cooperate with the Holy Spirit as you pray, plan, and do together.

Swanson also offers some reasons why transformation movements falter. Note, all of these reasons have to do with leadership:

1. Leaders do not have a clear idea of where they are going and a workable map to get there.
2. Leadership teams move from a catalytic role to one of sponsoring and owning ministries.
3. Current leaders fail to engage senior leaders from the diversity of the body of Christ, especially prominent leaders from the African American and Hispanic communities.
4. Leaders are not able to move beyond prayer and relationships.
5. Leaders are committed to the transformational process but are not engaging in community-based ministry.
6. Senior leaders are not leading the way.
7. A low level of commitment by leaders leads to an administrative movement rather than a catalytic leadership role in the community.
8. The strategic initiative is sometimes hijacked by another competing agenda.
9. The initiative is underfunded, typically beginning with the leadership team.
10. Leaders do not give enough emphasis to fostering spiritual vitality and relationships within the pastoral community.
11. Leaders do not really understand the holistic and comprehensive nature of transformation, so they settle for something less.
12. Leaders think too regionally and don't develop local relationships and initiatives.
13. Leaders fail to mobilize believers and leaders from the marketplace.<sup>242</sup>

Swanson believes that city transformation happens as the whole church gets involved in the whole city with the whole gospel. From the parable of the leaven (Matt 13:33), Swanson argues,

The key to changing a community is not the speed at which it happens; it's the fact of the church's involvement in the community that makes the critical difference. The presence of the yeast will always cause the dough to rise... And just as it takes the

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242. Swanson, *To Transform a City*, 124-126

thorough penetration of the yeast to transform flour, water, and sugar into bread, it takes the church penetrating every domain of the community to transform the community. Light illuminates, salt preserves, but it is the leaven that transforms.<sup>243</sup>

Swanson does not need to define a movement as “rapid” or “explosive,” rather he is more interested in the outcome than the speed in which it happens.

One last Swanson contribution to this conversation will be highlighted. Swanson describes Everett Rogers’ theory from *Diffusion of Innovations*, that there are five categories of individuals in any social system: innovators, early adopters, middle adopters, late adopters, and the laggards. Transformative ideas are initiated by the innovators (about 3 percent of the social system), then early adopters (about 13 percent) adopt the idea without asking, “who else is doing this?” Middle adopters (34 percent) understand the idea but need more certainty, “where is this working?”. Late adopters (34 percent) want certainty that the new idea is working successfully in a setting similar to their own. Finally, laggards make up 16 percent and are last to get on board, and indeed may never get on board.<sup>244</sup> Swanson argues critical mass is achieved when the early adopters are on board.<sup>245</sup> If this theory is correct, it would behoove city leaders to focus on reaching out to the early adopters first.

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243. Swanson, *To Transform a City*, 47.

244. Swanson, *To Transform a City*, 165.

245. Swanson, *To Transform a City*, 166.

Tim Keller

Of Keller's three commitments of a center church (gospel, city, and movement), his explanation of movement may seem the least clear.<sup>246</sup> This lack of clarity or confusion lies in how Keller begins his discussion of movement: "The last area of theological vision has to do with your church's *relationships* – with its community, with its recent and deeper past, and with other churches and ministries."<sup>247</sup> This definition does not fall in this author's view within the semantic range of the word "movement." Perhaps this is why later Keller introduces the phrase, "gospel eco-system" which does better encapsulate a picture of city partnerships and relationships.

Keller's concept of movement becomes clearer when one sees his intent. Keller wants to see people come to know Jesus in the city. Apart from soteriological reasons (i.e. wanting people to receive the gospel and be saved), he also believes that if there are sufficient Christians in a city, then there will be sufficient Christian influence on the civic and social life of the city to visibly impact the city life and culture.<sup>248</sup> Keller believes that a tipping point will occur in the city at around the ten percent mark.<sup>249</sup>

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246. Over the course of *Center City*, Keller's description of movement is quite fluid, and it is difficult to pin down exactly what it is that he is describing. Is movement the church growing faster than the city's population? Is movement an ecosystem of interdependent organisms? Is movement the balance between institutionalism and fluidity? Is movement the work of the Holy Spirit? For Keller, the answer to all these questions is yes!

247. Keller, *Center City*, 23.

248. Keller, *Center City*, 376.

249. Keller, *Center City*, 379.

Keller knows that this ten percent goal cannot be produced by people or churches alone, but is rather a work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>250</sup> At the same time, churches can contribute: they are gardeners who do the best they can to tend the garden (the city), while the Holy Spirit provides the seeds, the soil, and the weather.<sup>251</sup> This is quite a helpful analogy. Keller believes that churches will perform their role as gardeners best when they are working together, since, to continue with the gardening analogy, the garden (the city) is too big for a single gardener to handle. Indeed, it will take many gardeners working the garden. By gardeners, Keller means more than just churches or individual Christians, he includes a number of specialized ministries, such as evangelistic ministries, justice and mercy ministries, faith and work ministries, support for family life in the city, theological and ministry training, unity of Christian leaders, and a prayer movement. Only when all of these ministries are present and working together will the garden take shape.

This leads to two questions: First, what is the best way for these gardeners to garden? Keller believes the best strategy to increase the number of Christians in a city is not just to renew existing churches but rather to plant new churches, since “new churches introduce new ideas and win the unchurched and non-Christians to Christ at a generally higher rate than older churches.”<sup>252</sup> Existing churches then need to be given a vision for church planting.

Second, how will Keller get the gardeners on board? In order for churches to be willing to partner together for this goal, pastors (and churches) need to understand and adopt this

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250. Keller, *Center City*, 368.

251. Keller, *Center City*, 368.

252. Keller, *Center City*, 368.

vision (a.k.a. “contextualized theological vision”) of ministering together to the city. However, Keller recognizes that churches will only be willing to do so if they are not bound by their traditions, denominations and doctrine, i.e. there is enough fluidity in their structure and ecclesiology to buy into this center church vision and to work with others (which is the basis of Keller’s Movement Axis).

All of the above: the vision, the church planting strategy and the many organizations and ministry efforts working together in the city, is what Keller calls a gospel eco-system (see figure 4 below). This is a very thoughtful and comprehensive philosophy and model for city gospel movement.

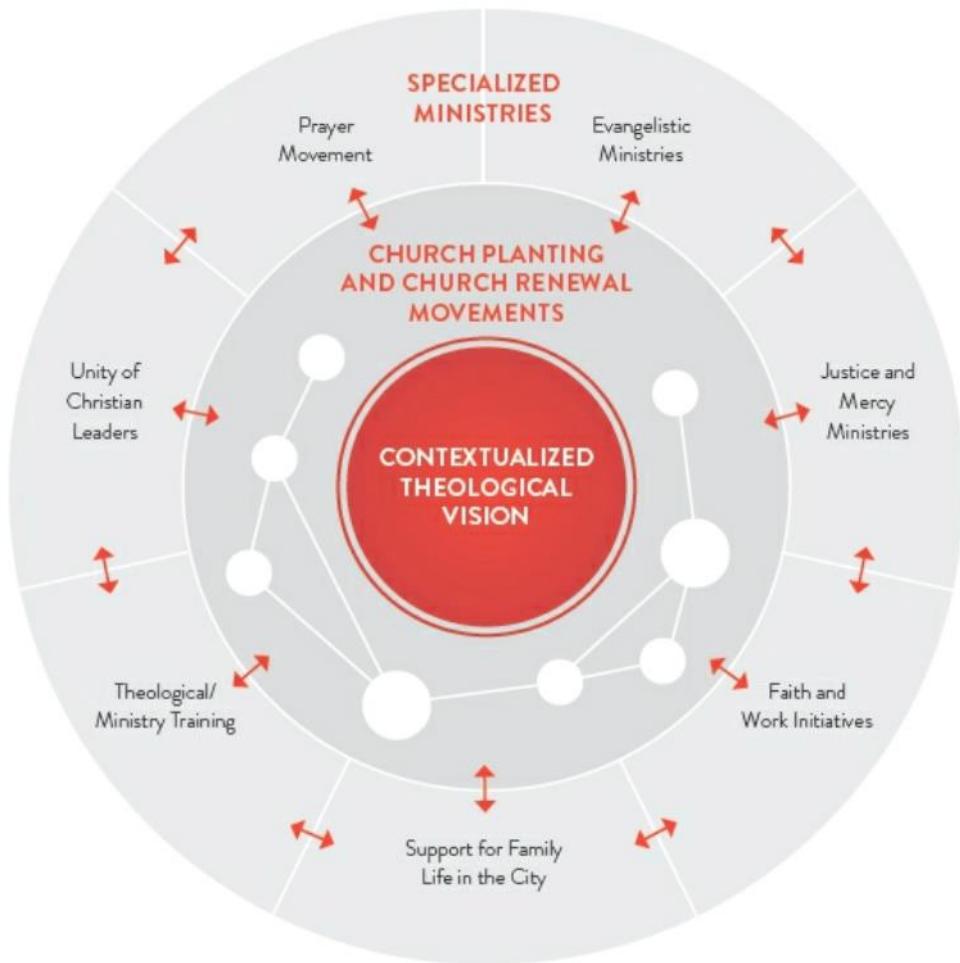


Figure 4. Tim Keller's Gospel Ecosystem<sup>253</sup>

#### Comparison of Writers

As can be seen, there are common themes as well as major philosophical differences as to what constitutes a movement. The reasons for this broad range were previously explored in chapter two. One way to summarize the writers' positions relative to one another might be to

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253. Keller, *Center City*, 372.

evaluate their positions based on two axes: the speed of a movement and the level of organization of a movement (see figure 5).

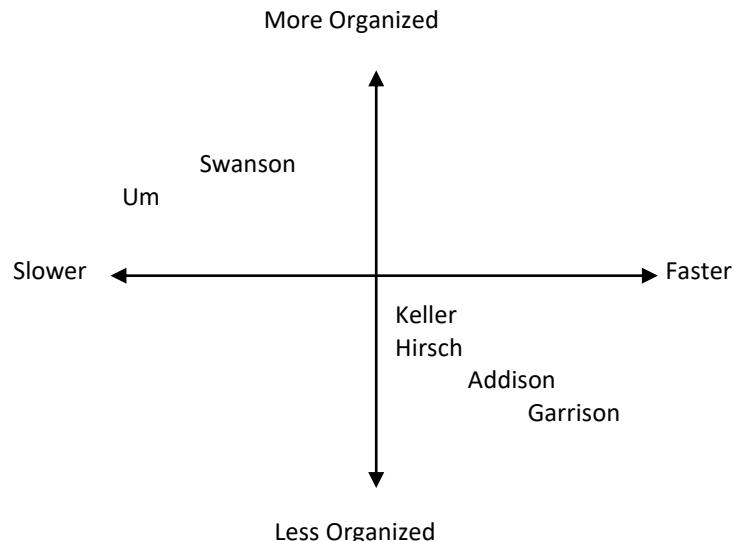


Figure 5. Movement Spectrum: Speed versus Organization

The writers surveyed in this section on Movement have been evaluated based on these scales.

The speed axis evaluates the pace of these writers' definition of a movement. Garrison and Addison define movements as "rapid" or "explosive". The underlying rationale appears to be that the more rapidly people are being saved or churches are being planted, the more likely this is something that is Holy Spirit empowered. Um<sup>254</sup> and Swanson recognize however that city transformation is something that will take a while. This author wonders if the fascination with "rapidity" is a Western (or more specifically American) fascination with bigger, faster and stronger? Hirsch considers the early church a movement since it grew an average of 40 percent

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254. Um & Buzzard were not featured in this section but have been included as their position can be assessed from prior interactions in this chapter.

a decade, yet apart from the initial explosion of growth on the day of Pentecost, the early church experienced a growth of less than 3.5% growth on an annual basis. Most Americans would consider this solid, but not great for a start-up!

The horizontal axis has to do with the level of organization or structure in the movement. Garrison is again on the extreme. His definition of a movement is something is uncontrolled and largely layperson driven. On the other hand, Swanson has a higher comfort for organization and argues for the importance of strategic leaders. His offered models for city transformation generally require deliberate partnerships between churches and organizations. Keller has been placed in the center, which is where this author thinks Keller would prefer to be.

## CHAPTER 4

### PROJECT DESIGN

#### **Project Goals**

This goal of this project is to help answer the question: Should a city host a Movement Day expression? As described in chapter one, this question has two underlying components.

First, is Movement Day able to catalyze city gospel movement? In chapter two, the author laid out a theological framework that suggested how in theory a gathering of Christian leaders can be part of a city gospel movement. However, the question remains as to the effectiveness of Movement Day specifically.

Second, *how* should a city host a Movement Day expression? What are the key principles and practices of organizing and hosting a conference that will effectively participate or foster city gospel movement? This is a question of best practices.

#### **Possible Research Methodologies**

To answer these questions, the author has chosen to use a qualitative research methodology rather than quantitative research methodologies, and specifically: semi-structured one-on-one interviews.

Several alternate methodologies could have been employed to answer these questions. However, these were deemed impractical or not the best fit for this project. Three alternate methodologies are discussed and evaluated below.

## An Experiment

Experiments are the gold standard of research methodologies, but are also very difficult to run in social science, and particularly religious, contexts, as the scope is often very large (as with this research question) and as such, there are too many variables to be properly controlled (including the most powerful variable of all: God). It is possible to conceive of an experiment where two similar cities are found (population, geographical and cultural context, industry strengths, religious contexts, etc.). If two such cities could be found, a MDE could be held in one city, and then the researcher would observe with additional quantitative (statistical analysis) and qualitative (surveys) methods to determine the effectiveness of the MDE.

Such an experiment however would seem impractical as there are too many variables to control. Each city has its own particular context, and it would be very difficult to set up an appropriate control subject. Cost and time restraints would also be huge barriers. Finally, this kind of experiment would not take seriously God's role in advancing his Kingdom.

## Statistical Analysis

While it may be completely impractical to run a controlled experiment to answer the thesis-project questions, it is possible to observe cities that have held MDEs. Since each MDE (in theory) is supposed to have specific city realities that it desires to tackle within a ten-year timeframe, it may be possible to observe relevant statistics to see if there is a difference in the before and after data. For example, the first Movement Day in 2010 set a ten-year goal of seeing the percentage of Manhattan residents attending evangelical churches grow from 3 percent to 10 percent by 2020. It would seem possible to test the progress of this goal.

There are a number of attendant challenges in such an analysis. First, there is the challenge and cost of collecting such specific data, i.e. counting the number of Manhattan residents attending evangelical churches. Moreover, it would then be necessary to satisfactorily define what is meant by “attend.” Organizations like Barna do not generally do city specific surveys unless they are financially commissioned to do so. Second, not quite ten years have passed since the first Movement Day. Since statistical surveys often have a lag (e.g. 2020 data may not be available until 2021), it would be challenging to assess the ten-year goals of the first Movement Day at this point in time. Third, assuming there is growth in the number of Christian evangelicals in Manhattan, there is the challenge of determining how much of that growth is attributable to Movement Day. Given the number of possible variables, this would seem to be impossible to do. Fourth, even if statistical surveys revealed that the percentage of evangelical Christians in Manhattan fell short of ten percent, this would not necessarily constitute a fair test of the effectiveness of Movement Day, since Movement Day organizers can develop better practices, and in addition, it is only Mac Pier’s (and Tim Keller’s) assumption that a rise to ten percent is an indicator of gospel movement. Finally, since each MDE will have different goals due to their different contexts, it is difficult to use this methodology to assess the potential effectiveness of Movement Day in other cities.

### Surveys

A more feasible methodology would be to utilize surveys – a blend between quantitative and qualitative research. Movement Day participants across different MDEs could be surveyed post their specific MDE gathering. Participants could be asked to evaluate the effectiveness of

MD (qualitative research), e.g. How effectively did the MDE move the participants towards missional unity? How effective was the theological vision casting? More quantitative questions on a survey might include: Were participants more or less motivated to practically engage the issues of the city? Did they sign up for any practical initiatives that came out of the MDE?

The primary challenge of this methodology would be in getting access to MDE participants, as well as adequately incentivizing MDE participants to also participate in the survey. These are not insurmountable challenges, and researchers interested in this topic may be able to utilize such a methodology. The great benefit of surveys is that they are helpful for organizers to assess the effectiveness of the Movement Day in achieving their near-term or immediate goals for the conference. If Boston holds a Movement Day in the future, such a survey would be an important part of self-evaluation for the conference.

In the end, this author did not utilize this methodology as he did feel as though he had sufficient relationships with MDE organizers to be able to request this kind of access. Cost and time considerations also played a key role.

### Semi-structured Interviews

In the end, the author chose to use semi-structured interviews with Movement Day organizers, which is a form of qualitative research. This methodology also has its weaknesses in addressing the questions posed by this project. Interviews are more subjective (for both subject and interviewer). In the end, the answers expressed can be the subjective opinions of the subjects. There is the challenge of overcoming biases introduced by the interviewer. Also,

depending on how many subjects are interviewed, the findings will be based on a very small sample size of MDE organizers.

However, recognizing these challenges, this research methodology was chosen as the best way (among all the alternatives) to answer both questions of *why* and *how*, from the perspective of potential MDE organizers. Asking actual MDE organizers about their experiences would be helpful for potential MDE organizers. For example, why and how they came to the decision to host a MDE for their city? What were their goals? How successfully were those goals advanced? How did they prepare the city for Movement Day? What were the mechanics of hosting a Movement?

A semi-structured interview allows for a balance between flexibility to address the uniqueness of each subject, as well as the organization to ensure that similar questions are being asked of each subject. A semi-structured interview also has the advantage of leveraging the superior knowledge of the organizer in regard to his/her MDE (relative to the researcher). Some of the statistical analysis and survey research described above may already have been done by the organizer saving the researcher much time and energy.

### **The Project**

The section will describe the project participants chosen for semi-structured interviews, the format and range of questions asked of the subjects and conclude with additional considerations in designing the project.

## Project Participants

The project participants were chosen from leaders in the United States who have organized a Movement Day in the past. As much as possible, leaders were chosen from cities as similar as possible to Boston. However, since there have been a limited number of Movement Day Expressions in the United States (as compared to internationally), the selection was somewhat limited. Six candidates were ultimately chosen.

### **Mac Pier (Founder and CEO of MOVEMENT.ORG – New York City )**

Mac Pier is the Founder and CEO of The New York City Leadership Center, as well as former President of Concert of Prayer Greater New York. In these capacities, Mac Pier joined with Tim Keller and businessman Bob Doll to co-found the first Movement Day. In 2018, The New York City Leadership Center was renamed MOVEMENT.ORG with two ministry arms: LEAD.NYC focuses on engaging New York City churches, service organizations and business leaders in greater New York City, and is the current organizer of Movement Day NY, as well as Movement Day Expressions which serves cities around the world by working with local leaders to launch local Movement Day expressions. Mac Pier is the primary visionary for Movement Day, and is the author of *A Disruptive Gospel*, which tells the story of Movement Day.

### **Ebony Small (Former Director of Movement Day Expressions)**

Ebony Small is the former Director of Movement Day Expressions (and was still in that role when interviewed). In 2019, Ebony joined the PULSE Movement to become the vice president of multiplication. Ebony spent eight years with Movement Day, helping organize the

first Movement Days and subsequently becoming the primary consultant for global cities considering and organizing their own Movement Day expressions.

**Adam Durso (Executive Director of LEAD.NYC)**

Adam Durso has been the Executive Director of LEAD.NYC since 2018. Adam Durso was a consultant for the Movement Day Global Cities in 2016, and then led Movement Day in NYC in 2017-2019. Under his leadership, Movement Day NYC has become much more New York City focused, with over 85% New York City participation in 2017 as compared to 37.5% in 2010.

**Rob Kelly (President and CEO of FORCLT Missions Network – Charlotte, NC)**

Rob Kelly is the founding President and CEO of FORCLT (forcharlotte). In 2018 and 2019, FORCLT hosted Movement Day Charlotte. One relatively unique feature of Movement Day Charlotte was a very strong research component, with FORCLT producing a “State of the City” report before each Movement Day Charlotte in 2018 and 2019. Kelly is a highly regarded thought leader in the city movement space.

**David Mark Alexander (Executive Director of MovementDFW – Dallas Fort Worth, TX)**

Mark Alexander has been the Executive Director of MovementDFW since 2016. Dallas was the first city outside of NYC to host a Movement Day, and so there is more history and potential for data points in regard to Movement Day.

### **Glenn McDowell (Co-Chair of Philadelphia Gospel Movement – Philadelphia, PA)**

Glenn McDowell is the co-chair (and co-founder) of Philadelphia Gospel Movement, which hosted its first Movement Day in November 2019. Of the cities represented, Philadelphia is perhaps the most similar to Boston (relative size, cultural influence and geography).

#### **Format and Questions**

The six subjects were interviewed between February 2019 and February 2020. Each interview was approximately one hour long. Four of the interviews were held using video technology (zoom.us) and two of the interviews (Adam Durso and Ebony Small) were conducted in person in New York City. Each subject was given the possible interview questions before the interview.

A semi-structured interview begins with a set of pre-arranged questions from which the interviewer can ask more specific questions to better nuance answers and address the specific context of the subject.

Three types of questions were asked: Questions that addressed their specific context; questions in regard to best practices, and finally, questions about effectiveness and impact.

#### **Questions of specific context:**

These questions were designed to highlight the particular context and circumstance of each Movement Day. These questions were designed to get at the *why* of Movement Day, i.e. why did these cities decide to host a Movement Day Expression? These questions included:

- What was your role with Movement Day (and/or specific organization)?
- How many Movement Days have you led/helped organize?
- What led you to run a Movement Day? What made you decide to run it again?
- What were the specific pressing realities in your city that your team wanted to address?
- What were the outcomes you hoped to achieve?
- Movement Day's goal is to accelerate, inspire and catalyze a city gospel movement. How would you define "gospel movement"?

### **Questions of Best Practices**

These questions turn to the actual organization of a MDE. How can other cities learn from the experience of these MDE? Is there an ideal structure? What are the best practices for leaders in city gospel movements? These questions included:

- What were the greatest successes of Movement Day in your city?
- What could have gone better with Movement Day?
- What lessons did you learn as you organized Movement Day?
- What would you do differently?
- [If the participant has been involved with organizing more than one Movement Day] What changes did you make between Movement Days? Why did you make those changes and did the changes have their desired outcome?
- What advice would you give to someone who is considering hosting a Movement Day?
- What needs to be in place before a city can host a Movement Day?

- What are the five most critical considerations as a city prepares for a movement day?
- How did you ensure that the organization of the event was in alignment with the goal of catalyzing a gospel movement in your city?

### **Questions of effectiveness / impact**

The last set of questions addressed the perceived effectiveness and or impact of Movement Day from the perspective of the organizer:

- What has been the gospel impact of movement day in your city? Anecdotal evidence? Statistical evidence?
- What progress have you seen in terms of your specific outcomes?
- What are the particular processes or dynamics you see working in Movement Day that leads to a gospel movement?

### **Additional Considerations**

The audio of all six interviews was recorded. Zoom.us provides audio and video recordings. In person interviews utilized the audio recording function on Evernote. These interviews were transcribed (edited for readability and smoothness) and have been included in the Appendix of this thesis-project.

While the author's preference was to have an in-person interview (which has the advantage of allowing the interviewer to better observe non-verbal cues), geographical considerations made it difficult to conduct all the interviews in person.

## **Conclusion**

The selection of a semi-structured interview was a careful one based on the methodology which would most effectively address the thesis-project question on the one hand, balanced with a consideration of various challenges and constraints (e.g. time, financial cost, etc.). The interviewees/subjects were chosen among city network leaders who have a clear theological understanding of city gospel movement and have actually organized a Movement Day expression.

The goal of the project was to answer the question that city leaders might ask: why and how should a city host a Movement Day expression? The presumptive answer to the first part (why) is that Movement Day expressions have the potential to catalyze city gospel movement. The semi structured interview questions were designed to test this hypothesis. The findings and success of this project will be presented and analyzed in the next and final chapter.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### OUTCOMES AND CONCLUSIONS

#### Introduction

The goal of the thesis-project is to answer the question: should a city host a Movement Day expression? More specifically, the question has to do with Movement Day's potential to catalyze a city gospel movement. In chapter one, the context of the city of Boston was described since there are practitioners in Boston asking, should Boston have a Movement Day expression? In chapter two, a theological framework was laid to help understand the importance and conceptual reality of "city gospel movement." A theological case was made for how conferencing can be part of advancing city gospel movement. In chapter three, the extant literature in the city gospel movement space was summarized, with the writings of some of the foremost thinkers examined. In chapter four, a case was made for semi-structured interviews as the best way to find answers for the thesis questions. In this final chapter, the findings of the six semi-structured interviews will be analyzed, and conclusions will be drawn where possible, and potential next steps for future inquiry will be offered.

The remainder of this final chapter will be divided into four sections. First, the project design will be evaluated. Second, a summary of the findings will be presented.<sup>1</sup> Third, conclusions will be drawn regarding Boston and Movement Day, and some further reflections

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1. Transcripts of the six semi-structured interviews can be found in the appendix.

on Movement Day and city gospel movement will be offered. Finally, the author will explore and offer potential next steps for future academic inquiry.

### **Evaluation of Project Design**

Overall, upon the conclusion of the project, the author believes that individual semi-structured interviews were an appropriate project vehicle to test this question. The subjects were truly passionate, reflective practitioners and presented a wealth of knowledge based upon extended and relevant experience, while being candid and humble in their answers. The author does not believe that there could be a better group to interview to evaluate Movement Day from a theological and practical point of view. The author also believes the overall foundational questions (the structured side of the interviews) were appropriate and valid. However, there were challenges in the project that were not fully anticipated, as well as shortcomings in the interview designs that have become apparent upon completion of the interviews.

First, the six interviews were conducted between March of 2019 and February of 2020. The scheduling of the interviews was due primarily to the author's personal schedule, and only secondarily to the availability of the subjects. The long lag between interviews meant that there was some discontinuity between the interviews. Some of the interviews were also conducted prior to the completion of the author's theological framework. While those interviews remain very helpful, the author believes that those interviews could have been even more focused had they come after a theological framework was firmly established in the author's mind. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that those interviews were also very

helpful in bringing the author up to speed with some of the common language and concepts that practitioners in this space have adopted.

Second, semi-structured interviews require much from the interviewer in terms of knowing precisely when and how to veer off script to questions of targeted interest, as well as when and how to draw out deeper details and information. More preparation for each interview would have been helpful in this regard. The author acknowledges his shortcomings in this area. As such, any shortcomings in the interviews can be primarily attributed to the author as the interviewer and not the interview subjects.

Third, upon completion of the interviews, the author wishes that some additional questions could have been included in the foundational questions. Some of the missing questions include:

- Questions as to the best practices pre and post Movement Day. What specific preparations are necessary? How did the Movement Day organizers develop relational trust in the city? How did they follow through after the Movement Day? Since Movement Day is just one day meant to support the other 364 days, greater emphasis in the inquiry could have been placed on the work that goes on throughout the year. This question (and information) was presented in some of the interviews, but the author wishes that it had been part of the structured questions.
- Questions as to the explicit and implicit theology of Movement Day. One possible line of inquiry would have been to ask the subject who their most significant theological influences were, i.e. which theologians and practitioners were most influential in their ministry? Which books were they reading?

- Questions as to alternatives. As some of the organizers indicated, there are significant opportunity costs to holding a Movement Day expression (in terms of time, resources, and energy). One question that could have been asked if any alternatives had been considered and were being considered, that might also have accomplished their specific goals of fostering a gospel movement in their city.

An alternative format to individualized semi-structured interviews that might have been considered was to have a group interview where all six of the participants were interviewed together. This might have allowed for an interesting dialogue where the participants could have offered additional (and potentially contrasting) insights than being interviewed separately. The disadvantage of such a format however are that it would have been very difficult to get all six in the same room at the same time to be specifically interviewed by the author.<sup>2</sup>

### **Summary of Findings**

As described in chapter one and two of this thesis-project, under the meta-question of whether a Movement Day can catalyze a city gospel movement are two sub-questions. The first question is: *Should* a city hold a Movement Day expression? This can be broken into two further questions: first, a question of efficacy: does Movement Day work? In what ways does it work? Or put another way, is it worth the money, time and energy that it will take to plan?

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2. The six participants are quite likely often in the same room together, but with many others also present, attending to bigger issues.

Second, a question of readiness or context: are there pre-existing conditions that need to be in place in a city for a Movement Day expression to be effective?

The second sub-question is: *How should a city hold a Movement Day expression?* This is a question of best practices and models. In this section, the author will summarize the findings from the interviews under the category of these questions.

### Should a City Hold a Movement Day?

#### **How effective is Movement Day?**

Mac Pier outlines in both his book and interview that before a Movement Day gets off the ground, a city team should answer three questions. First, the research question: “Where are we today regarding some specific pressing reality?” Second, the vision question: “Where do we want to be ten years from now regarding that pressing reality?” The third question is a tactical question: “what do we need to do specifically in the next year?”

From an outsider’s perspective, one way to evaluate the effectiveness of Movement Day is to consider if cities were able to “move the needle”<sup>3</sup> in those pressing realities. The most established Movement Day expression is the original one in New York City. One of the specific targets for New York City in 2010 was to see the attendance of Manhattan residents grow from 3% attending evangelical churches to 10% by 2020. Keller and Pier both use this indicator as a sign of city gospel movement. Mac Pier points out that research done in 2014, shows that

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3. This is a phrase that is often used by the Movement Day organizers. “Moving the needle” refers to targeting specific metrics that can be demonstrably changed over time. For example, third grade literacy levels might be a needle that church leaders could target and seek “to move.”

Christianity had grown to 5% in Manhattan (from 3%). More recent data is not available and will not be available until it is specifically commissioned. Ebony Small indicated that Movement Day had targeted two other stubborn realities: the murder rate in New York and high school dropout rates, both of which appear to have declined since 2010.<sup>4</sup>

However, as the subjects interviewed note, one cannot attribute these positive changes to Movement Day. While it is possible that Movement Day may have played some (small) part, it is nearly impossible to use these kinds of broad societal metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of Movement Day because there are too many other factors. In the case of the murder rate or high school graduation rates, there was a clear positive trend in these statistics long before 2010.<sup>5</sup> It might be possible to find metrics (“needles”) that are more specific (neighborhood based or school based), that aligned with clear and concrete initiatives, and more rigorous statistical analysis, that will allow researchers to statistically evaluate some societal metrics as a measure of Movement Day’s effectiveness. Adam Durso outlines how since 2018, Movement Day NY has been focusing on specific zip-codes and specific metrics, and has partnered with a research organization (Cinnamon Network). In the future, it may be possible to more clearly discern the effectiveness of these initiatives. However, currently, such analysis is beyond the

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4 Per Ebony Small’s interview. <http://www.disastercenter.com/crime/nycrime.htm> shows that the murder rate in New York declined from 4.1 (per 100,000 people) in 2010 to 2.9 (per 100,000) in 2018; “New York Crime Rates, 1960-2018,” <http://www.disastercenter.com/crime/nycrime.htm>. Statistics on high school dropout rates are more difficult to find, but a study by The Research Alliance for New York City Schools at NYU shows that graduation rates steadily improved from 2004 to 2018; “How have NYC’s High School Graduation and College Enrollment Rates changed over time?” accessed February 20, 2020, [https://research.steinhardt.nyu.edu/site/research\\_alliance/2019/06/28/how-have-nycs-high-school-graduation-and-college-enrollment-rates-changed-over-time/](https://research.steinhardt.nyu.edu/site/research_alliance/2019/06/28/how-have-nycs-high-school-graduation-and-college-enrollment-rates-changed-over-time/).

5. According to the FBI, murder rates in NYC have been in decline since 1990. High School graduation rates have been rising since 2004, which was when the study began (which may mean the rise began even earlier).

scope of this thesis-project. As such, while the “pressing or stubborn realities” language is helpful in terms of helping city leaders envisioning the broad societal change that the city needs, pressing realities are not useful metrics for evaluating Movement Day.

Instead, one must evaluate the effectiveness of Movement Day based on other smaller goals (which may contribute to gospel movement). In this regard, Movement Day does seem to be effective in the following. First, Movement Day as an event, shows great potential in advancing missional unity in the body of Christ. Pier describes Movement Day as an “ecosystem gathering”. By this, he means Keller’s gospel eco-system which includes various mission agencies, churches and church planting initiatives, centered around a “center church” theological vision.<sup>6</sup> For its part, Movement Day has shown success in bringing church, non-profit and marketplace leaders together, as an expression of church unity. Mark Alexander and Pier point to the relational unity that Movement Day Dallas helped build that led to friendships and pulpit swaps between white pastors and pastors of color.

Another area in which Movement Day shows, at least anecdotal, success is in the area of catalyzing (young) leaders. Movement Day has made it a priority to encourage millennial and Gen Z leadership. Grant Skelton is a millennial leader in Dallas who is offered as an example. Pier is proud of the way Movement Day has collaborated with Young Life in New York City, and the expansion of Young Life from working in 5 districts in 2010 to 25 districts. Ebony Small further explains that, At “Movement Day, leaders are actually being drawn into a space [where] we believe that God is looking to catalyze them and ignite them to allow their leadership to

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6. See chapter three for a more detailed description of Keller’s gospel eco-system.

become more of a leader within the city not just a leader to their respective ministry organization or business.”<sup>7</sup> From a personal standpoint, the author notes that attending Movement Day NY in 2015 was instrumental in his personal journey towards a city vision of ministry.

Movement Day offers the opportunity to cast a theological vision to a wider diversity of the Church than is often gathered, and to invite more leaders into holding a center church vision. Movement Day seeks to be an “incubator and accelerator of big ideas.”<sup>8</sup> Movement Day can be a source of innovation, as in more recent iterations of Movement Day NY, where facilitated conversations using “open-space technology” invite participants to be tactically and strategically engaged, to collaboratively and innovatively engage in urban mission. Alternatively, Movement Day can help connect the larger body of Christ to initiatives that are already in place. In Charlotte, Movement Day Charlotte was helpful to connect the larger body of Christ to specific initiatives that were led and designed by respected local backbone agencies that were recognized experts in those specific fields.

Lastly, it could be argued that preparing for a Movement Day might be even more valuable than the Movement Day itself, as the relational equity that is built up to prepare the city for a Movement Day will last long after the event itself.

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7. See interview with Ebony Small in appendix.

8. See interview with Mac Pie in appendix.

## **When is a City Ready for Movement Day?**

For Movement Day to be effective, are there pre-existing conditions that need to be in place? The six MD organizers interviewed were generally agreed upon the following:

First, there needs to be a commitment from key stakeholders in the city. For example, Adam Durso believes strongly that committed support from the most influential pastors in New York City (such as Tim Keller, AR Bernard, Jon Tyson, etc.) is critical to the continuing momentum in LEAD.NYC's momentum (which now organizes Movement Day). Movement Day Charlotte was driven forward by the commitment of Bishop Claude Alexander (and Rob Kelly) among others.

Second, there needs to be some level of relational unity and trust in the city among those Christian leaders. Small notes that there must be a "maturity of networks in the city" and that "Movement Day should only take place because leaders in the city want it to happen." McDowell notes that years of relationship building took place in Philadelphia before their first Movement Day in 2019.<sup>9</sup>

Third, there seems to have been an established prayer movement in every city that held a Movement Day. This aligns with Boston's history of Revival where prayer was a critical component leading up to the Revivals.<sup>10</sup> Kelly quotes AT Pierson, "There's never been a spiritual awakening in a country or locality that did not first begin with united, believing prayer." These prayer movements have often been the source of relational unity in the body of Christ.

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9. McDowell goes back to the work of John Wanamaker and the YMCA in the 1800s and Christian Endeavor in early 20th century.

10. See chapter one.

Fourth, the interviews highlight the importance of credible research to give Christian leaders a compelling picture of the city's needs. Charlotte is perhaps the best example of the potential for solid research to help unify the body around specific needs of the city, as a foundation for a city vision, and to give shared and reproducible language to the body of Christ. FORCLT has produced a "State of the City" report since 2018, at great effort and cost, to provide a document that the Church in Charlotte can utilize. In New York City, the Cinnamon Network has been engaged to do zip-code and neighborhood level research and provide specific metrics that churches can rally around.

Finally, while not a specific pre-condition, interviewees noted the importance of taking sufficient time to prayerfully discern and build up the necessary relationships and commitment from key stakeholders before holding a Movement Day.

### How Should a City Hold a Movement Day?

If the goal of Movement Day is help catalyze or contribute to a city gospel movement, what are the best practices in running a Movement Day to optimize its potential impact? In this section, some implicit models will be explored, and important principles/practices will be outlined.

### **Movement Day Models**

Movement Day expressions in different cities have had different overall purposes or goals. Kelly sees MD Charlotte as a way of accelerating the work already done in the city network space. McDowell saw the first MD Philadelphia as a way of bringing the church

together and casting a vision for collaborative mission. The early Movement Days in New York similarly were more vision-casting focused. More recently, since 2017 in New York, Movement Day has been about bringing together a smaller more influential group of leaders to strategically and tactically tackle specific issues of the city.

There is a range of models in terms of size or attendance. The early Movement Days emphasized larger gatherings. Kelly suggests that in order to reflect the unity of the whole body, a large gathering is necessary. The more people that are present, the more likely that the whole body is being represented and that the “right people” are present in the room. On the other hand, Durso emphasizes that “having more attendees did not necessarily increase influence.” Durso’s argument would be that having the right people in the room is more important than having more people in the room. Both arguments make sense. A larger gathering would seem more representative, and yet, if many of the attendees were from a single local church or organization, there is not as much collective diversity as one would hope. Durso’s model assumes that one has the relational networks to know and invite the “right people” to join the gathering. There may also be a tension operating here between smaller and faster, and bigger and farther.

The various Movement Days seem to have different philosophies on leadership as well. The Charlotte model exhibits strong leadership from established backbone agencies and megachurches, as well as strong leadership from Rob Kelly. In this model, churches trust the leadership and are willing to be led and onboarded onto specific initiatives that have already been designed by the backbone agencies. The more recent New York model also features strong leadership, and the specific issues that will be discussed at Movement Day are decided

earlier by collaborative meetings of leaders in specific spheres (especially non-profit and marketplace). However, it appears that New York operates using a more facilitative model at Movement Day where the gathered leaders have more space to design the tactical initiatives together. Mark Matlock has become more involved in Movement Day as a facilitator using open space technology, helping facilitate both in New York and Philadelphia.<sup>11</sup>

### **Important Practices and Principles**

From the six interviews, five important principles or practices seemed to be emphasized. First, the subjects indicated the importance of neutral, backbone agencies in leading Movement Day. Durso cited a study by the Center for Social Innovation at Stanford's Graduate School of Business on the importance of backbone agencies in collective impact.<sup>12</sup> Backbone agencies are the neutral conveners that can bring other organizations together. They can set the agenda because they are trusted not to have their own agenda but are "neutral". True neutrality would seem impossible as that would require no agenda, but neutrality here might be defined as emphasizing collaboration over a specific agenda. These organizations have built trust that they are about the city and not about their own organization. The importance of neutrality was also discussed in relation to any venue for Movement Day.

Second, the critical importance of relational unity and trust was emphasized. Mac Pier argues that biggest challenge in any city is a "trust deficit." Leaders need to able to trust one

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11. See chapter two for a description of Open Space Technology.

12. These studies can be found at  
[https://ssir.org/articles/entry/understanding\\_the\\_value\\_of\\_backbone\\_organizations\\_in\\_collective\\_impact\\_1](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/understanding_the_value_of_backbone_organizations_in_collective_impact_1)

another to work collaboratively. Kelly argues that “this type of work is a social capital experiment. It is about leveraging the trust of multiple people working collaboratively.” This would highlight again the importance of having multiple networks that have built up trust participate in a Movement Day.

Third, that Movement Day was a gathering of leaders from the three spheres of church, non-profit and marketplace was continually emphasized.<sup>13</sup> Theologically, this follows the definition of a city as a place of worship, safety and productivity.<sup>14</sup>

Fourth, each of the organizers emphasized that the work of catalyzing city gospel movement was not just the work of one day, but the rest of the year. Movement Day may be able to accelerate what is going on the rest of the year, but it is insufficient by itself. A movement requires ongoing relational investment and vision casting. The actual work of blessing the city must be carried out the rest of the year. A picture of this can be seen in the early church in the book of Acts. There was a “day”, the Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit moved powerfully and a movement was catalyzed, but there was also continued leadership and vision casting, continued gatherings in homes and in the temple, and a devotion to prayer and fellowship (cf. Acts 2:42-47). Pier states, “there is no one event that will do everything that a city needs. The real axiom is that the more present leaders become to each other, the more present God is in the city.” He and Durso advocate a rhythm of three meetings a year (paralleling the Old Testament model of people traveling to Jerusalem three times a year). In

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13. In New York, they also emphasize now the importance of having government leaders.

14. See chapters two and three.

New York, pastors, non-profit leaders and marketplace leaders gather two to three times a year in their own specific spheres, and then all together at Movement Day.

Finally, as previously noted, Movement Day has a strong emphasis upon leadership as a general principle, and the importance of raising local contextualized leadership in particular. Citing the example of the Apostle Paul, Pier argues that “leaders catalyze gospel movements.” Movement Day has an unapologetic emphasis on gathering leaders and helping raise up future leaders.

#### Additional Observations

The author notes that Movement Day has grown and evolved over time. In New York, to the three-pronged emphasis of church, non-profit and marketplace, government has been added. Movement Day in New York has also become much more localized and New York centric. Early Movement Days tended to emphasize vision casting as leaders were on-boarded, and then later became more strategic and tactical.

City leaders have a great deal of flexibility and freedom to contextualize Movement Day to their own cities. The different models seen from interviewing leaders from just four cities highlights this flexibility.

There is a clear opportunity cost to running Movement Day in terms of the resources, time and energy required. Each of these cities decided that Movement Day was worth running. In the case of Charlotte, after two years of Movement Day, while appreciative of the benefits, leaders in Charlotte decided not to run another Movement Day in 2020, instead focusing upon

other efforts and initiatives. Clearly, the decision to hold a Movement Day must be done prayerfully and continually.

## Conclusions

### Boston and Movement Day

The author believes that based on the data and considering Boston's context that Boston leaders should strongly consider utilizing Movement Day as a way of bringing about missional unity in the city. Rob Kelly assesses Movement Day expressions as a "very good product", and it is a compelling application of Tim Keller's gospel eco-system theory.<sup>15</sup> To the extent that a practitioner finds Keller's center church model a helpful framework, the present model of Movement Day will also be compelling.

As described in chapter one, Boston has clear pressing or stubborn realities, regarding the percentage of Christians in Boston, inequities that exist along racial lines, divisions and a trust deficit that exists between the suburbs and the city, white churches and black churches. These are issues that will take the whole church in Boston to address. Any event that can serve as an accelerator for unity in the city ought to be considered.

At the same time, Boston holds many of the conditions necessary for the idea of gospel eco-system gathering to be appealing and possible. There are many churches and agencies that do hold a center church philosophy and vision. In addition, Greater Things for Greater Boston, and more recently, the Boston Collaborative (which is a closely related organization focusing

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15. The relationship between Keller's gospel eco-system model and Movement Day is discussed in more depth below in "Further Reflections on City Gospel Movement and Movement Day."

upon marketplace leaders and non-profit leaders), represent a network of networks, which can potentially serve as neutral conveners. Since its inception in 2010, Greater Things for Greater Boston has successfully hosted focused gatherings for church and non-profit leaders that seek to accelerate what God is already doing in the city through various agencies. As such, GTGB has some credibility as an organization that is working for the sake of the city, and not for its own agenda. Recently, GTGB partnered with other agencies to host a conversation with the new Superintendent of the Boston Public School system.<sup>16</sup> Boston also boasts one of the leading city-based research organizations in the United States (and is often referenced as a model for best practices for such organizations) in the Emmanuel Gospel Center. The Boston Collaborative has also compiled a summary of relevant city research (just as Jim Denison did for Dallas)<sup>17</sup>.

At the same time, much work still needs to be done. GTGB does still need to build up more trust, and while many of the largest and most influential churches in Boston are represented on the steering team of GTGB, the two largest churches in Boston are not directly represented in GTGB. More work needs to be done to build relational equity between networks in the city. Also missing currently in Boston is a clear unified prayer movement. For many years until 2017, pastors gathered annually for the Boston Prayer Summit. Eventually the

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16. Other organizations include the Boston Collaborative, the Black Ministerial Alliance (or BMA), the Boston HERC (an educational non-profit organization), and the Boston Education Collaborative (a sub-agency of the Emmanuel Gospel Center which focuses on church-school partnerships). In addition, all the Executive Directors / Directors of these organizations serve on the steering team for GTGB.

17. See interview with Mark Alexander in the appendix.

Boston Prayer Summit declined due to a lack of clear vision and purpose.<sup>18</sup> As Swanson warns, “Few will attend more than a couple of prayer meetings if they sense that these gatherings lack a clear purpose.”<sup>19</sup> Since 2018, the author has helped lead a weekly pastor’s prayer meeting, which in embryonic form holds a vision for city-wide unified prayer for God’s kingdom to come to Boston, and God’s will to be done in Boston as in heaven. As Rob Kelly counsels, the steering team of GTGB must continue to seek to discern God’s will for Boston along with other key stakeholders in the city, to find a vision for collaborative city gospel movement that is contextualized to Boston. Some of those key stakeholders may still need to be identified and brought to the table. As of now, it is unclear whether GTGB or the Boston Collaborative are aware of all the critical components that would make up the third tier of Boston’s gospel ecosystem.

#### Further Reflections on Movement Day and City Gospel Movement

The interviews reveal the very strong influence that Tim Keller’s Center Church theological vision holds for Movement Day. In effect, Movement Day is a real-time city-wide testing of Tim Keller’s theories, as an event that seeks to intentionally gather the constituent parts of Keller’s gospel ecosystem. The very structure of Movement Day is designed to advance Keller’s vision of a city gospel movement. Plenary sessions provide the theological vision (tier

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18. The author was part of the steering team that decided to close the Boston Prayer Summit.

19. Eric Swanson and Sam Williams, *To Transform A City: Whole Church Whole Gospel Whole City* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 109.

one) and developing the second tier (church planting) and fostering linkages within the third tier is the practical goal of breakout sessions.

The question that practitioners might ask is: Was Tim Keller correct? Keller's gospel ecosystem is still just a theory, a very compelling theory theologically and conceptually, but one that has not been fully tested and proven yet. Historically, gospel movements have not followed his theory since not all the components of Keller's gospel ecosystem have existed throughout history. At the same time, Keller's theological vision is not based primarily on what the church has done throughout history, but rather, his vision is a real-time contextualization of the gospel for today's global cities.

Keller posits that a tipping point is reached in the *gospel eco-system*, when churches are able to reproduce in five to six years of their beginning, leading to a projected doubling of Christians and the church every seven to ten years.<sup>20</sup> He further posits a *citywide tipping point* when ten percent of the population is made up of gospel-shaped Christians.<sup>21</sup> Neither scenario seems to have happened yet in New York City, where Movement Day is most advanced and the concept of the gospel eco-system perhaps most developed. The tipping point hypothesis has also yet to be tested in a city context. Various studies have suggested that tipping points can be as low as 10 percent and as high as 40 percent.<sup>22</sup> It would be interesting to study cities where

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20. Tim Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 376, Kindle.

21. Keller, *Center Church*, 376, Kindle.

22. See chapter two's discussion on tipping points.

the Christian population has exceeded ten percent to see whether gospel movement might be visible in the way that Keller posits.

### Next Steps

Based on this work and findings of this thesis-project, the author would suggest several additional lines of inquiry.

First, as outlined above, it would be fascinating to study historical gospel movements and see if gospel eco-systems were visible and if the tipping point hypothesis has validity. Given this hypothesis, it would be interesting to see if it is possible to compare cities (in a cross-sectional study) with differing Christian populations to determine the impact of varying percentages of Christians in the city. Such an analysis would also need to factor in the level of development of each city's gospel eco-system.

Second, the flattening of the world means that global cities are more connected to one another than ever. This means that there are prospects for city gospel movement to jump from one global city to other global cities. One of the fascinating stories of Movement Day is how the concept has been embraced globally (arguably even more so than in the United States). Future studies might include global Movement Day leaders, with the idea of studying whether gospel movements might be able to jump from one city to another.

Third, LEAD.NYC's work targeting ten zip-codes and four specific needles (high school graduation rates, teen pregnancy, remedial Math and English scores of third graders, and youth recidivism) bears continued monitoring given their specific focus, targeted initiatives and a strong commitment to research and data collection through the Cinnamon Network USA. It

may be possible to have quantifiable metrics to determine the actual impact of collaborative efforts.

Lastly, this thesis-project focused very narrowly upon Movement Day as a means to catalyze city gospel movement. As Rob Kelly reminds, Movement Day expressions are just one way that city leaders could choose to work to advance a gospel agenda. Given the opportunity cost of hosting a Movement Day expression, it is valid to ask whether there might be alternatives or different models to advancing a city gospel movement. For example, the Exponential Conference appears to have very successfully raised the profile and need for church planting in the United States.<sup>23</sup> The author is unaware of any thesis-projects that have focused upon the Exponential Conference and its role in raising the awareness of and viability of a gospel or church planting movement in the United States. Since church planting is a major component of Keller's gospel eco-system, one could look to agencies that have focused specifically upon church planting movements in the United States. The writings of David Ferguson and Todd Wilson would be particularly relevant in this regard. Finally, within this line of inquiry, other models of city agencies might be examined, for example the Leadership Foundation network or Redeemer City to City.

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23. From the perspective of this church planter (and author).

## Final Thoughts

David Currie observes, “the church began in a city, Jerusalem, and the church will end in the city, the New Jerusalem.”<sup>24</sup> In between, the author believes there is an exciting opportunity to be prayerfully used by God to advance his kingdom in the global cities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As Boston leaders continue to deliberate, discern, and dream together as to whether Movement Day is God’s next step for the gospel movement in Boston, the author stands in confidence that “he who began a good work in [Boston] will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil 1:6). The author will continue to labor that Boston will live up to its Puritan hope that it would be a city set on a hill that cannot be hidden.

## Epilogue (April 13, 2020)

Since the completion of this thesis-project, world events have seemingly passed by this thesis-project. On March 10, one day after the author’s defense, Governor Charlie Baker announced a state of emergency in Massachusetts. Over the ensuing days and weeks, social distancing protocols made in-person gatherings unfeasible, including in-person church services. College students were sent home and graduation ceremonies were canceled. Churches have been forced to innovate and discover new platforms to assemble and worship.

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24. David A. Currie, “Ecclesiopolis,” in *Reaching for the New Jerusalem: A Biblical and Theological Framework for the City*, ed. Park, Seong Hyun, Spencer Aída Besançon, and William David Spencer (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2013), 38.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also exposed the darker underbelly of cities. In chapter two, cities were argued to be places of local and global influence. In a flattened world focused in cities, i.e. places of human density, not only does the spread of ideas become more possible, but also disease and contagious sickness. In a COVID-19 world, human density itself is the enemy.<sup>25</sup> A spirit of fear permeates contemporary discussions of “flattening the curve,” as cities seek to prevent hospital systems from being overrun. The pandemic has stressed societal systems, including health services and the economy, exposing existing vulnerabilities. While every person in the city has been impacted by the pandemic, vulnerable populations have been impacted more-so, both directly by contracting the COVID-19 and in economic terms.

Homeless populations are disproportionately at risk of contracting the virus as social distancing is difficult in shelters. Early data suggest Black Americans are also disproportionately at risk. The pandemic has also exposed the digital divide in cities. Many Boston public school students were initially unable to participate in online enrichment activities due to a lack of access to laptops and internet.<sup>26</sup>

Churches have been forced to find new ways of being the church in a social distancing world, and pastors digitally connected together are innovating ideas and sharing best practices in various networks. Churches have found virtual ways to gather (such as Zoom), and some of these virtual channels may remain in use even after the COVID-19 pandemic passes. Since March 10, the author has been part of more gatherings of pastors (over Zoom) than in the

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25. It is even possible that the COVID-19 pandemic will temporarily stall the pace of the world’s urbanization.

26. Boston Public Schools (BPS) has distributed over 20,000 chrome-books to help bridge this divide.

previous six months and has been involved in convening multiple Zoom meetings for pastors to hear from school district officials as well as one another. In addition, the author has also been involved in several virtual prayer meetings. Collaboration between churches in Boston has increased in order to address visible needs in the city such as homelessness, the digital divide and to help families who rely upon school meals for their children. While the church is not able to gather physically, the scattered church is still powerful, finding new ways to still be an *ekklesia*, an assembly. The author suggests that future D.Min scholar-practitioners will more deeply examine the theology and best practices of the virtual church. It is not inconceivable that a Movement Day expression (as well as other conferences) might one day be entirely virtually attended.

The COVID-19 pandemic will eventually pass and become a footnote in history,<sup>27</sup> and in-person gatherings and in-person Movement Day expressions will resume. At the same time, there will be a longer-term economic and social legacy left behind by COVID-19 and the premise of this thesis-project will still apply: the whole church will be needed to minister collaboratively with partners in the city to be a part of a gospel movement that will bring flourishing to broken cities and give glory to God. *Soli Deo Gloria.*

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27. The author does not intend to minimize the impact this period of social isolation will have on present generations and particularly Generation-Z for whom this will likely be a 9/11 moment.

## APPENDIX A

### INTERVIEW WITH MAC PIER (MARCH 6. 2019)

**BK: Can you state your name and role with Movement Day?**

MP: Sure. Mac Pier. Role is Founder and CEO of MOVEMENT.ORG

**BK: Let me start with this - what led you to run the very first Movement Day?**

MP: Sure. The first Movement Day grew out of some research that Redeemer and our organization had commissioned in 2009. We had started the Church Multiplication Alliance in 2003 and we wanted to determine what the progress of that was. We commissioned Tony Carnes; at the time his group was called the Values Research Institute. I think the name changed to Religions NYC. He basically conducted research to find out what the growth of Evangelical Christianity was in Manhattan and his conclusion was that from a 20-year perspective (1989-2009), the percentage had grown from 1% to 3% of people living in Manhattan attending what we would call orthodox churches. When we saw the research, we thought that it would be interesting to invite people to come and talk about not just New York but their own city. So, we set the date for September 30, 2010 and we met at Calvary Baptist in Manhattan.

**BK: It sounds like it had a focus beyond New York City from the very get-go.**

MP: Well, in the very beginning we knew people would come because of the faculty of the first event. We had Tim Keller, Bill Hybels and Brenda Salter McNeil. We knew that it would be attractive beyond New York. We thought the first year would be 70% New York and 30% non-New York but it was exactly the opposite. The first year, we had people from 34 states and 14 countries that showed up.

**BK: So, what made you decide to do Movement Day again in 2011?**

MP: Couple things happened. We felt like it was really valuable to bring leaders together and we really believe in what we would describe as the consultative model where people come together and learn from each other, as opposed to what I would describe as a conference model which is bringing experts and it's primarily a one-dimensional experience. Secondly, the day before we did our first Movement Day, we gathered cities or teams from cities who wanted to spend some time. That's where I met Jeff Bass<sup>28</sup> for the first time and we brought in George Gallup and we just thought it would be significant to bring practitioners together. At that meeting, I was approached by Kevin Palau from Portland and Jim Harrington from Houston and they proposed that we create what a Ten City Covenant of leaders that would commit to gather together every year for the next five years before Movement Day, and then two cities would take turns telling their story. That gave us another impetus to continue on.

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28. Jeff Bass is the Executive Director of the Emmanuel Gospel Center in Boston.

**BK: I see. You write in your book about stubborn realities. Were there specific stubborn realities that in 2010 that you were seeking to address through Movement Day?**

MP: Yes, when we started in 2008, we talked about our own 5 stubborn facts. One was the percentage of people living in Manhattan and worshiping in Manhattan that was a stubborn back for us. Second was the educational challenge of pastors in the New York City area- a lot of undertrained pastors. There's an educational inequality in the public-school system which was part of it. Internationally we were very concerned about things like the AIDS pandemic. New York is really represented by the world and that was one of the global concerns we were paying attention to at the time. Anyways, that was 4 of the 5.

**BK: Was that four?**

MP: The education of pastors was really a training issue. We subsequently created the Advanced Leadership Institute which addresses that, and that runs independent from Movement Day, so we don't address that as much in the Movement Day context now.

**BK: I know that you place value on having specific numeric or concrete goals. Were there specific goals that you had on these pressing realities?**

MP: Yes. On the church planting side, our aspiration was to see the evangelical population of Manhattan go to 10% and that's something we've kept in front of ourselves. We've been pleased that it took 20 years to go from 1% to 3% and took five years to go from 3% to 5%. There are a lot of factors to that, but we do feel like Movement Day has been a contributor to that. I think from the AIDS perspective, I know that we mobilized about a hundred and seventy-five churches that have in turn assisted 11,000 children, which benefited 600,000 people and communities. That was pretty well underway by the time we got to 2010. I don't think we had a narrow goal that was specific to Movement Day. I think on the educational disparity; that was very early stage working with an organization called 20/20 vision for schools. I think in the early days, the vision was to get 100 churches to adopt a public school and begin to engage at a local level. I would say we probably had somewhat mixed success around that; partly because of the enormity and complexity of the New York City public school system. There have been pretty significant initiatives. I would say that probably the most robust thing that has happened in that space has been the growth of Young Life. There are 59 community districts in New York City and around the year 2010, Young Life was working in about five of them. And they've been able to expand their growth by about 500% into 25 or so districts. That wasn't primarily because of Movement Day, but they were very active with us and able to connect with other like-minded people around that vision.

**BK: I see. And through Movement Day, I'm assuming that they were able to get some of those connections.**

MP: Yes, but I obviously want to be careful to not define their growth to primarily being the result of Movement Day - but we were a contributor.

**BK: Let me ask a more philosophical/theological question. One of the taglines on the website is that Movement Day's goal is to catalyze, inspire and accelerate a city gospel movement. Can you define "gospel movement" for me?**

MP: Sure. We say that the gospel movement is taking place when one of three things is happening: First, when the growth of the Christian community is growing faster than the general population; Secondly, when you're beginning to see a measurable change in some of the great social issues facing the city and finally, Christian leaders are increasingly finding themselves in positions of influence in the city. That last one is a little more subjective but the first two are pretty quantifiable.

**BK: It seems like one of the goals of Movement Day is to set outcomes in the first and second area?**

MP: Well one of the things we talked about is that before a Movement Day gets off the ground, a city team wants to answer 3 questions: First, the research question: "where are we today?" Second, the vision question: "where do we want to be 10 years from now?" The third question is the tactical question, which is, "what do we need to do specifically in the next year?"

**BK: There was a line in your book that was very intriguing to me: "Movement day recognizes a spiritual chain reaction. Cities shape culture, gospel movement shape cities and leaders catalyze movements." Can you unpack that?**

MP: Yes. I'll start at the back end. The real belief is that whenever God gets ready to do something, he raises up a leader. I really do believe that obviously God uses the church; the church is the community, but it often starts with an individual who really has the vision to make something happen. In the city context, we call them catalysts and they're really critical to movement. Once a movement gets underway, you can see...I think it's very evident in Boston in the work that the Emmanuel Gospel Center has done in their book, *The Quiet Revival* and talking about the discovery of 800 immigrants church they didn't know existed before. When you look at the writings of people like John Dilulio from Princeton, who started the faith-based office for President Bush in the year 2000, his basic premise was that you can determine whether an urban community is thriving or declining on the presence or absence of the local church. He really made the case on his research on how important a local church can be.

In New York that some of Tony Carnes' research has indicated that churches contribute a billion dollars a year gift-in-kind to the city so that's where - a gospel moving if it's growing and accelerating - you're going to see both spiritual and social flourishing in the city. And when you have cities like New York and Boston and LA, and somewhat Chicago. When the gospel is growing in those contexts, it really does have an impact on the culture. You begin to see leaders who have a voice in what happens inside their city. I know, for example, some of the work that we've done in Dallas. Movement Day has captured the imagination of the Mayor of Dallas. In 2016, the day after the police shootings in Dallas, the Mayor of Dallas approached a white leader and an African American leader who had met each other at Movement Day, and he asked them to advise him on how to handle race relations. The day after the police shootings, he had a press conference on CNN and the pastors standing behind him represented 80% of the congregants in Dallas. That's where you see a gospel movement really influencing the culture of the city.

**BK: I wanted to ask some questions about best practice. What have been the greatest challenges you've faced when you began and mobilized Movement Day? Actually, you can**

**speak to both the very first one in NYC but also your experience with helping start Movement Day across global cities.**

MA: That's a great question. In local cities you tend to have two challenges. One is that a lot of churches and leaders have a really shallow definition of the church. Often times, we confuse the local church with the church of the city, and we tend to define success in regard to how our particular church or organizations is doing, instead of really thinking about how do we impact the welfare of the whole city together. There is a bit of insularity and, I also think, a lack of curiosity. A lot of leaders really aren't interested in learning or celebrating what others are about.

I think the biggest challenge in any city is always what I would describe as a trust deficit. I really believe that the biggest deficit in a city is never money, space, or programming, but it's always trust. And when people don't trust each other they won't make time to be together. There is also a knowledge gap about their own city. One of my conclusions is that the average leader in an average church has little idea what's going on in their own city. The consequence of that is that a lot of churches make what, I would describe as, under-informed or mal-informed decisions about how to allocate time and resources to make the biggest impact. I would say those are some of the barriers.

As we think about Movement Day and cities around the world - not everywhere - but in many places, the faith community operates with the lack of urgency. One of the great lines that Josh Crossman spoke in our Movement Day in New York last year based on his research on the trends of church in America, he said that basically we're two minutes until midnight and when he talks about the trends of young people leaving the church and that half of the churches in America might close by 2050 unless there's some kind of Spiritual Awakening. That kind of data and trend should motivate leaders to really think critically about what is it that we can do together to address those realities.

**BK: Sorry, can you spell his name for me?**

MP: Josh Crossman. His 140-page article is called "The Great Opportunity," [greatopportunity.org](http://greatopportunity.org). It's the best thing I've read on the missiological analysis of the American Church in 40 years. It's pretty fresh. It came out in the last 18 months.

**BK: Great, I'll definitely read that. Between Movement Days, what changes have you found yourself making in terms of preparing or organizing the format of Movement Day themselves.**

MP: That's a great question. Movement days will look very different from city to city. A lot of it depends on context. One of the cardinal principles of a movement is that leaders really own what they design. So, what's important is that leaders are given permission to design whatever the Movement Day will look like. A lot of it will depend on the numeric strength of the group that is going to come together or depend on practical things like facilities and all those kinds of issues.

I think what we're learning is how important it is to give leaders those three questions as a starting point and to really encourage them to be true to those questions because we don't want Movement Day to be a one-off experience. One of the things that we've learned in the last 8 years has been the real value of leaders in a city gathering in some kind of corporate

gathering. There's something about gathering three times a year that helps create a culture among leaders in a city. It is a bit of a parallel to the Old Testament model of people traveling to Jerusalem three times a year. This is different from a denominational group that meets from time to time. It's different from a community group of pastors that meets from time to time. This is really intended to be some kind of citywide expression and some cities have it and some cities don't. And part of it is to say that no one gathering during the year whatever it is, whether it's a Movement Day or prayer meeting or the Global Leadership Summit - there is no one event that will do everything that a city needs. The real axiom is that the more present leaders become to each other, the more present God is in the city. So that's some of what we've learned over the years.

**BK: That's great. What are the three gatherings that are happening in NYC?**

MP: Every January we have the pastor's prayer summit. This will be our 30th year coming up. We'll average typically 250-300 leaders. Then we do the Global Leadership Summit in August/ That's a bit more decentralized. We'll have 8-12 sites for a region. Movement Day became the third Gathering.

**BK: What advice would you give to city leaders who are considering hosting Movement Day?**

MP: The standard place to begin is we think there are four critical success factors. One is to have some kind of expression of corporate prayer going on in the city. Often times that already exists. If it doesn't exist, a very simple idea which comes out of the Moravian movement is to invite churches to commit a day or month to pray for the city and then to build a calendar. You have 31 churches and then some neutral entity commits to create a simple prayer guide that can be updated and circulated. So that's a way.

The second piece is research: having some core research about the city that helps democratize the understanding of what's going on in the city. Third, you need to have a core group of churches that are committed to have something like this together. Fourth is having a core group of marketplace leaders. The marketplace leaders often provide the kind of strategic acumen that is necessary. Often-times they are the philanthropists behind it and they also bring cultural credibility that no one else has in the nonprofit world.

**BK: Would you say that you would need all of these elements in place before having Movement Day or can Movement Day help stimulate some of these things?**

MP: I think the answer to both is yes. I think you have to have at least some modest expression. Are you pretty familiar with Keller's gospel ecosystem diagram from Center Church? It's in there, and in many ways, it's a diagram of Movement Day. In the diagram Tim has drawn three concentric circles. The center circle is what he calls contextualized gospel theology. The second circle is the necessity of church planting. The Outer Circle represents all the churches and agencies and marketplace leaders that are part of the faith community. And my commentary on the diagram is that the vibrancy of the gospel in the city is in proportion to the depth of unity between diverse members in the same ecosystem. In many ways, Movement Day is an ecosystem gathering. That's why if you have just pastors meeting or just have nonprofit leaders meeting, it really doesn't represent the ecosystem.

**BK: Is a unified prayer gathering critical?<sup>29</sup>**

MP: I think so. I mean, the prayer movement here is over 30 years old and like anything else, it has a bit of a life cycle, and you're always going to need new leadership and new models. But I do think it's critical for a variety of reasons. For one, the spiritual side of it. It's a reminder to ourselves that at the end of the day, God's got to show up. We are not smart enough, clever enough, or wealthy enough to effect the kind of change we want to have happen. What's interesting to me is - are you familiar with the Moravian movement? One thing that's interesting to me about their model (what they called *hernhut* or Lord's Watch) where they prayed for a hundred years - is that I don't think there's any other possible ongoing expression of unity apart from that kind of prayer activity happening because anything else ends up being an event. Whatever the model is, in many ways, that creates a climate or ongoing expression that I think is vital. It's hard to quantify of course, but... I would say- no city has to have it all figured out but to be making an earnest attempt in that direction is a great place to start.

**BK: As you organize Movement Day, how do you make sure that the organization of it (structure, etc.) is actually aligned with the goal of catalyzing a city gospel movement.**

MP: I would say, there are probably three critical elements. One, you really do want it to be inspirational. You really do want people to encounter God in worship and in prayer. It is very important that there be someone in the context of speaking who can articulate what we would call an urban theology or talk about how God is at work in the city and it resonates with what you're trying to do. From a content perspective, whatever presenters you have, presenters need to be both inspirational and educational. We really want people to walk out of the day knowing their city far better than the beginning of the day. The third component is where we people are able to have, whether breakouts or consultations in the second half of the day of the event, where people are really able to get their fingerprints on whatever is going to emerge from the day. We ideally want people to lead Movement Day knowing where they can connect if they are interested, or they can connect with other people who are doing similar kinds of efforts that are headed in the same direction. One of the things that we talk about is that we want Movement Day to be the place where the smartest Christian leaders get time together in a room with the biggest hearts and design the future together. That's really what we want to happen. We think that Movement Day as both an accelerator and incubator of the big ideas that need to take place in the city.

**BK: That's really good. Out of curiosity - I know each city designs their Movement Day - some will do one day .... Are there three-day Movement Days?**

MP: That's a great question. No, the only three-day Movement Day we've had was Movement Day global city 2016. Part of the reason we did that was people didn't want to come from halfway around the world for a day. Movement Day London was a two day. The more regional they are they tend to be an extra day. London was really predominantly a Northern European gathering. They had a thousand leaders from 95 denominations that showed up. Movement Day Africa was two days. That was 50 cities that showed up. If it's just a city, it typically tends

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29. An explanation of Boston's prayer situation was given as part of this question.

to be a day. Part of the beauty of it is that it recognizes the time poverty of people in cities and the need to be highly deliberate about how you spend that day and the things you do and talk about.

**BK: Makes sense. So, we're on the very back stretch here. This is where you get to boast a little about Movement Day. What have you seen as the gospel impact of the Movement Day in the city? I have read some of your examples of what's happened between 2009-2014 and city fest city serve and so on and so forth. Do you have any more recent data in terms of the percentages of evangelicals in Manhattan? Do you have data beyond or since 2014?**

MP: We don't, not that I've seen. We need to check on that. What's happening in NY now which is really interesting is... and a lot of it is leadership. I think there is a maturation of working more closely with the civic community, working with the major, getting good research, even though it's fairly embryonic in terms of efforts, I do think it is a maturation on getting good research on what is happening. I think NY and Dallas is where we have the most stories to tell and I think a lot of that is captured in *Disruptive Gospel*. Thinking around the world. One of the phenomena happening in places like Charlotte and Pretoria - is that there's been a huge hunger to share pulpits. Charlotte talked a little about what they did last year. Pretoria has had over a hundred churches doing this every year together for several years- which is quite remarkable. In thinking about some of the things that are happening in the UK. People in cities are beginning to talk about what it means to create a 30-year vision for their city - to think more long term. One of the things they talk about in Europe a lot is the idea of helping the faith community get organized. And that's an element of it - I think that's where the rigor of it is so important like intellectual rigor, research, who's doing what...

A couple of places that are very interesting to me...one is Indonesia. Indonesia probably has the most robust national prayer movement in the world right now. A lot of it is because it's the country with the largest Muslim population. They've got 2000 websites that are promoting *Sharia Law*. So, the church in Indonesia knows what it's up against. But it's very committed and very organized and they are planning to get their first Movement Day off the ground next June.

And India probably has one of the most organized activities at a city-wide level across the country. They're talking about wanting to do their own hundred city gathering in a couple years, which is remarkable. India has many people in Africa when you think about the density of all that!

And we've been in conversations with leaders in the Balkans cities. We got a call this morning with leaders from Athens, Macedonia, Sofia, Bulgaria, Albania and they're gathering in November in Athens and I talked to a young guy in Macedonia last Friday. He said that out of the city of 1 million on a Sunday they'll have 500 people in church. So what's been interesting to me about Southern Europe, India, parts of Africa, Indonesia - is that this [Movement Day] seems to be something that is helping faith leaders get organized in many of the hardest places around the world and in some ways it doesn't fully answer your question about some of the outcomes because they're so early on but I do think the core competency of Movement Day is really in the convening space, if that makes sense. Convening is, what I would say, is the pragmatic part of unity on the front end and collaboration is a pragmatic expression of unity on the backend of Movement Day. There are a lot of anecdotal stories out there. When we had

Movement Day Chennai a couple of years ago, what was remarkable about that meeting was seeing church bishop sitting next to rickshaw drivers in a very segregated culture. Then coming out of Movement Day one of the first projects we got millennials to distribute school supplies to 2000 children in one of the two thousand slums in the city. It isn't a huge scale, but it speaks to a simple expression of mobilization that can grow out of whatever is going to happen.

**BK: What are the benefits and importance of branding as you organize Movement Day?**

MP: Well, in the beginning, when we decided to have the first event, we actually came up with it together working with the guys at Redeemer. We thought at first, we'd want to call it the M Conference, but we didn't want to be confused with the Q Conference. But part of the original value was this idea of M standing for Movement but the subset ideas, cities, gospel and leaders - those are kind of the three foundations actually of the movement. One of the reasons why branding and language is important is because every movement needs semantic currency. There needs to be something that is consistent from experience to experience. That's really what Luther did in the Reformation is by putting the Bible in the hands of a lay person, he created common language for people. I think the beauty of Movement Day is that it's simple and it's neutral. A lot of people would not know that there's actually a MOVEMENT.ORG out there but they're much more familiar with Movement Day as a brand. I think part of the beauty of it is that it allows cities to attach their own name or region to it and that's the part of the strength of it.

**BK: Can you describe the particular processes or dynamics that you see working in Movement Day that actually does catalyze a city gospel movement.**

MP: I think the foundations of it are getting like-minded leaders together who really want to make a difference in their city and they want to do it in a way that's informed, that's strategic, that recognizes the interdependence that we have on each other, that really is rooted in what I would describe is kind of a Ephesian theology that says that we really are incomplete without one another. And that God can do immeasurably more than we ask or imagine. Those are really some of the values that really drive this. One of the things that Ephesians talks about is being God's new society and the whole case study of Acts 19 is quite powerful when it says that all of Asia heard the gospel in two years because of what happened in the town hall of Tyrannus. And that's really what we want to see happen is we want to see in both our own city and in other cities around the world...we really believe that movement is important. I think for any of us one of the anchor values in this really is going to be a spirit of humility that leaders and cities can learn from each other. I think, for example, The Emmanuel Gospel Center is probably up certainly a national if not a global best practice in the whole research space. So that's one of the assets that Boston has a very few cities in the world have.

**BK: Yes, that is one area that we do have a strength. Thank you. This has been really helpful.**

MP: No problem. I have empathy for doctoral students!

## APPENDIX B

### INTERVIEW WITH EBONY SMALL (MARCH 28, 2019)

**BK: Can you state your name and your current and past role for Movement Day?**

ES: Ebony Small. My current role is Director of Movement Day Expressions with MOVEMENT.ORG. I started as the Events Manager. I was with what was called then the New York City Leadership Center - then I was promoted to Director of Movement Day and Events with also then the New York City's Leadership Center and finally transitioned into my current role.

**BK: So how many Movement Days have you been directly involved with in terms of organizing?**

ES: Oh, in terms of organizing and giving leadership to and planning.... I have been involved in... let's see, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016... six different Movement Day expressions all here in New York City and that's inclusive of giving leadership to Movement Day Global Cities in 2016 which we hosted at the Jacob Javits Convention Center. Then I also led and planned the 100 City Summit, which we hosted in 2018, at the Museum of the Bible.

**BK: That's great. You're the perfect person to talk to about this project. As you've organized or led these Movement Days, what have been the greatest challenges that you have noticed in mobilizing Movement Day both in New York and in global cities.**

ES: Initially, I would say, helping leaders to understand what Movement Day is. The name itself is not in any way descriptive of what the vision is for the event or as we like to say, gathering. And so, with every Movement Day gathering, there has always been this emphasis to cast vision as to what a gospel movement is. So, part of the mission of MOVEMENT.ORG is to catalyze Christian leaders to impact their city. And one of the tag lines for Movement Day has been "leaders changing cities through gospel movement." So initially we had to define what a gospel movement is.

Tim Keller was very influential in that because he had coined a definition of gospel movement that was directly tied to his work with City to City and directly tied to his role as senior pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church. Along with Tim, Mac Pier, who is the Founder and CEO of MOVEMENT.ORG, and Bob Doll, who is our Chairman of the Board but represented the marketplace leader, in what we call this three legged stool in what we think is essential for Movement Day expressions, which means that you have a representative of ministry leaders, of marketplace leaders, and parachurch organization leaders that are being convened together. So, Movement Day is a rallying point. Whereas many folks often just want to directly register to go to a conference because you want to hear a speaker or there's a topic of interest, the difference with Movement Day is that leaders are actually being drawn into a space because we believe that God is looking to catalyze them and ignite them to allow their leadership to become more of a leader within the city not just a leader to their respective ministry organization or business. So there's always this dynamic of looking to change and shift the paradigm of leaders that are attending these Movement Day gatherings and thinking about

how can we be catalytic in nature and how can we accelerate their understanding and their attitude to collaboratively partner with other Christian leaders and their City to be thinking strategically around how can we be very present and active in our faith in our city and how can we address the urban issues that are impacting the city. So, you're not just convening leaders to just hear a fire hose of information and just send them off and say, "see you next year." You're sowing within them information but you're immediately looking for them to do something with it and to do something collaboratively with other leaders in their city.

So that's a lot, One, to present to someone who has never heard of maybe gospel movements before and who has certainly never heard of Movement Day before and they're being invited into something that they just have no idea of what it is...so when you think about how that could be challenging, you are continuing to have to, I would say, fight against the natural inclination of someone when they come to attend something, versus - "I'm not here to attend but I'm here to be catalyzed," and you have to continue to paint that picture throughout and that's not easy. And most of the attendees of Movement Day are first-time attendees. That's what our survey results have shown over the longevity of the gathering itself. And so, you're having to restate that every year. That's a challenge when you think about how you can establish growing momentum in a city if everyone is attending the gathering for the first time. It would often feel like you're starting from the baseline every year. And so, when you are trying to create sustainable movement, that is a challenge.

And then, I would say, another challenge- and it came in the process of learning how is this a model that can be replicated in other cities, and encouraging the process of discovery and leadership, where we would empower leaders who attended the Movement Day gathering in New York to understand that New York's expression of Movement Day was not the end-all be-all in terms of what Movement Day could mean for their city context.

So, one of the first cities to launch Movement Day outside of New York was Dallas. And there would be a large contingent of leaders, I can remember, every year that would come from Dallas to New York to be a part of Movement Day and it was from their being a part of that gathering that they began to say, "This is amazing. We'd love to see this happen in Dallas. Let's facilitate this." And Mac, as really with all of the Movement Day expressions, began to invest a lot of his time journeying with these leaders - these ministry, marketplace, parachurch organization leaders in Dallas - kind of shepherding this process with them up, and uncovering what Movement Day could look like in Dallas. So, there was a level of leadership investment apart from just our ability to plan gatherings here in New York. Then we became these consultants and coaches to other cities in terms of their ability to plan and launch their own Movement Day and initially that wasn't the intention. The initial intention was: how can we convene the church of New York? How can we gather the church of New York to be critically looking at the issues that are impacting New York and collectively working together?

That was the desire for that first gathering in 2010. And what happened was something that was unexpected, where you had 60% of the attendees for that first gathering that were non-New Yorkers. Then, for our team, we had to shift our focus in terms of what are we actually stewarding here? Clearly this was not just something for New York. At the time, it became something for the nation. And then it shifted again where it became something for the globe. And much of it was tied to a lot of networks and relationships that Mac Pier has harnessed from a legacy, a lifetime of leadership in so many different spaces. And as he

continued to share the story of what God was doing in New York, many other leaders thought it would be possible for them.

So that presents another challenge where you're not solely just planning for New York, but now you're planning for a gathering that becomes a microscope that other leaders are coming to look through and examine and thinking about how this can be replicable for where they are. And so, your audience diversifies, and in the midst of that, the desire initially, for New York got lost. So whereas the initial focus was to galvanize the church of New York, now we had to shift our focus to casting vision for a globe about what city transformation could look like and what was God calling the church within the city to do in terms of leading in the space of City transformation. And we got away a bit from our focus in terms of serving New York.

So, in terms of the plenary representations that we put forth, they weren't New York focused, they had to become national focused or global focused. The break-out sessions, they weren't New York centric. We weren't talking about poverty and homelessness and high school dropout rate and juvenile detention or juvenile justice issues in New York. Now we're talking about global and national issues. And so, we continued in that vein really up until 2016. 2016 became this climactic year for Movement Day, where we hosted a Movement Day Global Cities. It was the first time we had ever hosted such a gathering. It was over the span of 3 days and we convened 3,000 leaders, representing 95 countries and over 400 cities. And again, we had this huge model of casting vision to the globe and sharing the success stories of what God is doing in cities, attempting to galvanize the bodies across these 95 nations to be thinking about how we can be more strategic and focused as it relates to city transformation. And actually, it was in the midst of that gathering, it was the first time that we hosted a breakout session that was targeted around launching your own Movement Day expression. We had never hosted a break-out like that, but we realized that there were so many global leaders in attendance, there would naturally be a desire for leaders to want to replicate this.

So, let me just kind of shift back. I know we were talking about challenges, but I would love to kind of give a framework of what Movement Day in terms of the structure of the day. So there are three different models that I think we would attribute to Movement Day. The first would be more of a leader's type gathering. This could be a half day or one day event within a city where you have the elements of plenary sessions where there's always those vision casters that are projecting what God wants to do in the city. You're celebrating the signs of hope – Ray Bakke always says you want to celebrate and recognize the signs of hope within the city. You're hearing those stories which are rooted in the legacy of that City and then you're making a case statement. You're explaining to leaders why there is a need for the body of Christ to unify and there's a need because our kids are failing out of school; we have a for-secure system that is reaching a critical point of concern; we have a homeless population; we have church governmental crisis. You're making the case for why the unity of the body of Christ is necessary. And then you're presenting opportunities for leaders to, then, be engaged around affinity areas. So that can look like breakout sessions in the afternoon of that time, that are speaking towards the urban issues that you're looking to move the needle forward in as it relates to that city.

The other model for Movement Day is, more I would say, is like a one to two day gathering. So now you may have a multitude of breakout sessions that you're allowing leaders to participate in more than one. You have, perhaps, an evening gathering that is used as

another unifier, perhaps it's a networking space. You're actually building into the construct of the Movement Day gathering itself an opportunity for leaders to actually partner. It's hard to form partnerships when you're sitting in sessions and breakouts for the entirety of the time. So now you're building into the gathering the opportunity to do that that would need to either take place in an elongated one-day or two-day model. And that could look more like a regional gathering.

And then these more national expressions that could be more of a multi-day, a two to three day gathering. That's what the Movement Day Global Cities model would be indicative of. And again, I would say, the programming, you have a lot more time to go deeper into some areas of interest, and you can diversify the elements of your program to not just vision-cast but be catalytic, foster real partnerships.

One of the things that we did with Movement Day global cities was we allowed each of the city teams opportunity to meet together as part of the gathering time. So, we made rooms available at the Javits Center for the team from Africa to get together, and Canada, the UK and so forth. And what you found was that leaders literally had to travel all the way across the oceans to actually be in the same room together, because they had never been in the same room together in their country or in their cities. And that was amazing! And I can think of some of the dialogue that came out of some of the Africa meetings where you had leaders that were actually apologizing to each other to either not being engaged with each other or apologizing for allowing racial differences to impact their ability to partner with them. So, there was a lot of reconciliation and healing that took place. But then there was also a lot of opportunity for a lot of dreaming to happen in terms of what we could actually do together. And it has accelerated the launch of Movement Days across the world. And so, coming out of Movement Day Global Cities, part of what we had to look at as an organization was now, "Who do we become?" We have so many cities that are now wanting to launch their own Movement Day expression. We need to be thinking about how we can serve them. So initially, we were directly planning Movement Days in other cities. I directly helped plan a Movement Day Greater Dallas in 2017, as well as Movement Day Arizona in 2017. And we quickly realized that we don't have the staff infrastructure to plan Movement Days in other cities, and that's really not the model that we want to put forth. We don't want the leaders in New York planning Movement Days in other cities. That is not at all indicative of what Movement Day should really look like. Movement Day should be locally owned and locally led. So, we had to make a decision as an organization. Whereas there was a need in Dallas and a need in Arizona for support and help, we had to learn how to say no and say this is not who we are. And that was new for us. We were typically a team that said yes to everything. I really had to help our team understand that if we don't start saying no to these things, we'll never allow this to become what it truly can be. The strength of who we are is our ability to coach, is our ability to consult, is our ability to gather and harness resources and be able to share them, and our ability to convene leaders at a global level. And with a small staff team of.... At the time... it was a two-person department. It was me as Director of Movement Day Expressions and we had a coordinator of Movement Day Expressions. And at the more senior level, we had Craig Sider as the President of MOVEMENT.ORG and President of Movement Day Expressions and then we had Mac.

Mac was entering into this phase of life where he wanted to travel less. He wanted to look to Craig and me to take on more of a leadership outside of New York and so that meant

increased travel. And you can't do all those things if you're tied to your desk planning events every day. And so, with that, in 2017, we launched Movement Day Expressions. And a part of my initial frame of thought was, "How do we catalogue all our resources?" So, we put together a catalog of documents and templates that can help jumpstart other cities and begin to just think about how we can do something like this and plan a gathering like this. We put those resources together and we made them available via Dropbox. We created pdfs and other tools that served as event timelines and guilds in developing plenary sessions and breakout sessions, and it was a plethora of information that we put together. And then with that, we began to develop what we called an onboarding process. One of the things that I began to evaluate is, "What's the time period between when a leader initially expressed interests and says I want to launch a Movement Day in my city to them actually launching Movement Day in their city. And I realized that was a period of about two years. What that served to help us understand is that there had to be a rhythm of coaching with these leaders and it needed to be informal. So one of the things that we quickly realized is that the leaders that we were working with, these leaders wanted autonomy, and they did not want to feel like we were imposing our will upon them and we had to just sit back and be able to say I'm available if you have any questions or if you have any need. But I am not operating at all as like a dictator to tell you what it is that you need to be doing with regard to your city. And we had to learn all of that, again, in terms of how do we best serve leaders?

So I began to implore with this bi-monthly type of coaching model where I would maintain a rhythm of having at least a phone conversation with each of these prospective Expression city leaders, bi-monthly, to just hear where they were, inform their thinking in any way that I could, connect them with other resources as a way to keep the momentum but also as a way to keep us connected. And then we began to evaluate: if this thing takes off in ways that we hadn't anticipated, how can we maintain just brand connectivity? So, we had to start thinking about branding, and realized as a ministry team that we wanted there to be brand connectivity. We developed branding guidelines which we started to share with each of these city leaders. And then at the request of our board, we moved into actually looking at formalized agreements, developing an actual partnership agreement that detailed not the transactional relationship that we were entering into, but a partnering agreement in terms of how are we willing to serve these cities in the launch of their Movement Day expressions, but also, how do we create some boundary markers in terms of what makes a Movement Day a Movement Day.

And in some of the things that we included in that agreement - initially it was a multi-page agreement which we've now gotten down to one page - but it speaks to the facts that what makes a Movement Day a Movement Day is that it bridges divides in the city. It bridges economic divides and social divides, generational divides. It unifies the body of Christ within the city. It is representative of not just the ethnic demographic of a community, but it is representative of the kingdom of God, meaning that you have different ethnic groups that are part of your expression. And then we also stipulated within that agreement that we would want for each of these expression leaders to allow a member of our senior team which is Mac, Craig, and myself, to have the opportunity to present at their gathering to share this global story of what God is doing. We felt like it was important that there be a connectivity between what's happening in that City and what's happening in the globe, that leaders should know that element of the story. And then we also indicated that we wanted these leaders to be a part of a

once-a-year gathering, an Executive Director's gathering that convenes all the leaders of Movement Day expressions because, again, it was important for us is that there be a depth of relationship within this movement community. And it's about six bullet points that we asked everyone to agree to.

There's no financial transaction at all. That was one of the big things that we had to wrestle with. Initially, we did have a financial model tied to coaching and consulting and we very quickly realized nonprofits don't have budgets for this, and if we lead with that, we'll kill this. And we removed all the tears of giving that would be associated with our partnership. It put a greater impetus on our team to fundraise, so that we would have the budget to travel internationally and domestically to serve as an ambassador for Movement Day.

Another way that we would support Movement Day expressions, and this is not in the agreement, but if a city is hosting a leader gathering within their area and they're galvanizing leaders, they're wanting to cast vision to them, they're wanting to explain to them what this Movement Day is, they would invite myself, Craig, or Mac to come in and just share the Movement Day story. We called that an Ambassador visit and we began to avail ourselves to do more of that.

We made some direct partnership with Q conference. And Q conference has a city leaders' gathering that takes place the day today before their multi-day conference begins and we felt it was important to be partners in that gathering because it brought us before city leaders within the US. And so, we wanted to be able to share with them about Movement Day and how Movement Day can become a part of their cities tool kit. And so those were some targeted areas that we were actually actively promoting Movement Day.

But much of who we became is receptors. We wait for a city leadership team to come to us and to self-identify and say, "We want to launch a Movement Day in our city. How might you help us?" And so as part of that two-year onboarding process that I mentioned before, I would have an initial - well initially it would be Craig and I- but increasingly it's just been me, but we would have an initial framing conversation with that city leader, and understand from them what their desire was, what their vision for their city is. A part of some of the questions that I would ask them is, "Who else in your city are you talking to about this?" I've explained to them from the beginning that if this is just your idea, this is not going to be successful. But if you have buy-in with other leaders in your cities that represent the ministry, marketplace, parachurch organizations, then you can become an Executive Team that is giving leadership to this expression of Movement Day. Because if anyone sees it as just "your thing," then it's not a neutral convener because it's "your thing." So, you want to be able to cause leaders to think of themselves as a convener from the outset, but understand as a leader even though they have the vision and the idea, they have to model the level of collaboration and partnership that they're asking others to engage in. And so, we would have that conversation. And then we would provide them with all of our resources once they actually would sign a partnership agreement and then link them into some of our relational networks.

One of the things that we launched in terms of a relational network is this bi-monthly Zoom video conference call for just the US leaders of Movement Day expressions. Again, it allows everyone to keep abreast of the Movement Day expressions that are popping up in the U.S., what the challenges are amongst each of those expressions. We have very candid conversations where there's some tension points within cities. Leaders will ask of themselves,

"I'm having this particular challenge in my city. Has anyone else had it? How have you navigated it?" So, it becomes a learning laboratory in that space. And then we like to create value added experiences, in terms of helping them to continue to think collaboratively and to navigate some of the tension points that we have gleaned in our overarching conversations to just serve as a springboard and their leadership. And we began a frame those conversations in that way. I can keep going unless you have other questions.

**BK: I had some other questions and actually you've answered some of them already. But let me go back to something that you said in the beginning and unpack that a little bit more. In terms of defining a gospel movement - you mentioned that Tim Keller was instrumental in that - but how would you define a gospel movement?**

ES: Well, let me start with Tim Keller's definition. That is, when a Christian population is growing faster than the urban population, that becomes evidence of a gospel movement. He also developed what was called the gospel ecosystem. It is a diagram that shows the interconnectedness of ministries within a city, all in a cyclical relationship where there is connectivity between the church, ministries, marketplace and you have all of these sectors within the city that are in relationship and partnership together - that represents a healthy gospel ecosystem. I would say that my definition of what I've come to learn what a gospel movement to be would absolutely parallel with those definitions, but I would also add that there is a clearly evidenced demonstration of unity within the body of Christ on display within that city. A unity that is representative of Christian leaders that are in partnership in relationship with each other - regardless of denominational affiliations, theological differences, gender, racial differences - that there is a true health and wealth of that type of leadership connectivity investment; that you have leaders that are actively doing things together for their city, and doing them together collaboratively and doing them together on a large scale; where the church is vibrant, and I'm not just talking about the one of the local churches but I'm talking about the church of the city - the collective entity of the body of Christ - that there is real strength, and the church is on display in that city. I think we can look at cities like Dallas that have a very strong presence of the church. Yes, they have some real challenges still there... you still have division along racial lines there but that's more systemic of culture, versus an indictment of the church, and I know that is one of the emphasis that the leaders within that city are looking to address. Within New York City there is a real health of the church here. You have leaders that are consistently doing things together and working collaboratively. So, for me, one of the big things is unity - and asking "where is the true evidence of unity" - not just soup kitchen days but real meaningful ministry that is significant for the city but impacts the city that others can take note of.

**BK: What are the critical elements that needs to be in place in order for there to be a Movement Day? You already mentioned that it can't be one person going at it alone.**

ES: Right. There needs to be a steering committee or executive team that is giving leadership to that Movement Day expression. And represented on that executive team should be ministry leaders, marketplace leaders, and parachurch organization leaders. There needs to be a clear pathway for funding. You can't do anything like this without resources. There needs to be a strong plan for fundraising and strong executors. There has to be a maturity of networks within

that city. Movement Day should only take place because the leaders in that city *want* it to happen. There is a desire to do something greater together. And Movement Day becomes an answer to part of that greater happening within the city.

I think of Charlotte when I think of that. There was already a health of nonprofits that were happening in a city and a health of churches that was actively serving the city and government. And now Movement Day became this catalytic gathering for us to do something on even a larger scale - for us to bring a larger scale of unity. So again, there is a strength of ministries, marketplace leaders, parachurch leaders, but there is also, I would say, a strength of leadership. You have strong leaders within that city that are gatekeepers for the city. They are people that others listen to and they have convening power. And because of their leadership and their investment of leadership, people respond to them. And when there is a clarion call to do something, people will come because "so-and-so" is a part of this. And so, there is a real strength of Christian leadership within the city.

And I would say, lastly, there is a hunger and an aptitude for the Kingdom of God to be advanced in that region. And there is a Kingdom mindset within the body of Christ in that region where they understand that the kingdom is bigger than the programs of the local church and that the kingdom is really establishing the presence of God in every place where the people of God are. And so that's indicative of every sphere of influence. How is the kingdom of God being manifested every sphere and empowering leaders within the city to be thinking that way? So those are the elements that I would say must be in place in order for there to be a healthy expression of Movement Day.

**BK: Earlier we talked about how thought branding was important in terms of branding connectivity. Can you speak a little more as to why there's a need for good branding?**

ES: As with any business entity, you can look at something visually and you automatically know what it is. There doesn't need to be a marketing campaign to explain it. If I see the Nike symbol, I know I can buy sneakers, I know I can buy athletic apparel. I know what that is. If I look at the Johnson and Johnson logo, I know that I can get pharmaceuticals and I know that I can get body care products. I know exactly what it is.

When people see that M, they should know exactly what it is, that this is a vehicle of church unity within a city and assemble of gospel movement. And when you see that a M, you know that there is this type of agenda in the city and we felt that that was important if we want to see continued momentum and acceleration, that it shouldn't be confusing who and what we are nor what we're inviting leaders to be a part of. There needed to be that level of clarity. But what we immediately found out, as with the case for humanity, period, everyone wanted it a different color and everyone wanted it to look a certain way. So, we've diversified the brand in terms of the spectrum of colors that M could represent. We've gotten a bit more definitive now that we have branding guidelines that reflect a national gathering, a regional gathering and more of a localized expression. I would say we haven't really imposed that new direction on leaders right now, only because we haven't taken that step as an organization. But we have it in place in terms of the document being in place. We can be a bit tentative at times. I think it is the complex of being an American-led organization and in terms of when you evaluate the reality of culture. Americans, the West, North America is not viewed favorably. We're looked at as being domineering, conquering and we're always up against that narrative and with our

present-day government and governmental leaders, we're very unpopular in a lot of places. And so, it causes us to be sensitive and not wanting to mandate certain things but also having a responsibility to ensure that this doesn't become lost and something that is so lackadaisical that it loses its substance.

But again branding is important because it brings that instant connectivity and it's something that truly there is no price tag that you can put upon folks' ability to recognize that they are part of something that's bigger than themselves, that's global, and truly represents movement. And so that's what we've seen thus far.

**BK: I think there are two big questions that I wanted to ask. The first was just in regard to the importance of being a neutral convener. Is it possible, for example, for a pastor to be a neutral convener if they're leading a specific church? They may have to speak on particular moral issues. I know in talking to Rob Kelly - he said he tries to avoid all of that in terms of doctrinal issues and so on so forth. But if you are a denominational leader or so on and so forth, is it possible to be that neutral convener?**

ES: I think it's possible. But you have to automatically accept that it will be sacrificial in terms of the responsibility. What I mean by that is, that as a pastor - and I can say this because as a pastoral leader - that there are intrinsically issues that you are passionate about, you're passionate about God's word, and you want to be uncompromising in that, but you understand that there are theological differences across the spectrum. And so, myself as a woman, I understand that there are denominations that completely believe that woman should not preach. And here I am, a woman preacher. So, if I understand that I want to be part of a unity movement in the city, again, as that leader, if I am leading an expression of Movement Day along with others, if I recognize that putting myself on the program, as the preacher, is going to alienate a whole segment of a group of people, and I don't necessarily want to see that happen because the greater goal that I want to see accomplished is not for me to prove that woman can preach but that church can be unified, then perhaps I understand that I can take a different role. Leaders have to constantly be asking that question, "How can I as a leader serve the needs of the city?"

And that might, often times, be at the sacrifice of something that is intrinsically important to you. Not to say that it's a permanent sacrifice because there will be opportunities, I think, for understanding in some areas, in mutual respect. But I think at the outset, your responsibility is, "How can I bridge divides and how can I get people in the room that would otherwise not be in the room, and how can I become neutral - not to the point when you're making the power of the gospel powerless and you're compromising; there need to be clear parameters where we are not compromising in this way. That's why tenants of faith are important. And value statements are important because everyone understands what we agree upon. But again, there's this reality that... I think it was said well, I think, by Bishop C. Alexander during our U.S. leaders gathering at Charlotte, he said that, as city leaders, we become a bridge that's walked on. And as leaders of movements, you are that bridge, and you have to understand that you are that bridge that's going to be walked on. So, you may not always be the person that always gets the recognition and credit. I would say people widely respect Mac Pier as the Founder of Movement Day, and although he will always give credit to Tim Keller and Bob Doll for their investment and leadership in terms of being the founders of Movement Day,

it's been Mac who, in a large part, devoted his life to be this unifying force to the body of Christ and has said that "I will sacrificially travel the world and be a part of different networks and so forth for the sake of seeing unity come in the body of Christ." And there are, I would say, other spaces that we probably need to get into as a movement that we haven't, but that would be up to the local city leaders to be a part of.

But again, to answer your question, I would say a pastor can be a leader of Movement Day expressions, but it might call of that pastor to be able to, for a season, as we say in Christianese...be able to sacrifice or surrender some areas of their leadership that are really near and dear to them for the sake of being a unifying force in the city. And people will look for that in word and deed - how you respond to tough situations, and how you respond to that leader who you know has very strong opinions about homosexuality, or minorities, or women.... And how do you model serving that leader when it's hard and when it's not convenient...people will look at that because that becomes an example and model of how we truly demonstrate unity. I think unity is one of the hardest...things, for lack of a better word, to foster because it requires that you be willing to partner with people who are different than you, who have different theology than you, just for the sake of Christ... how do we promote what we agree upon versus what we don't agree upon? And that's tough. That requires a level of confidence as a leader, boldness as a leader, courage as a leader, conviction as a leader. But this is why you don't find many leaders in this space in terms of being unifiers because many just want to die on their sword for what they are passionate about, and they don't want to see anything else. And only certain types of leaders are willing to be a chameleon, in a sense, to serve the needs of a multiplicity of audiences.

**BK: Okay. One last question in regard to the effectiveness of Movement Day. You've been part of leading Movement Day since 2011. What are the stubborn realities that the Movement Days that you organized sought to highlight and seek outcomes towards? And what outcomes have you seen that you feel that Movement Day has helped shift the needle on those things?**

ES: So I would say, initially for New York - the stubborn realities that we went into that Gathering in wanting to address was the high murder rate in the city, the high school dropout rate with in the city, the rate of poverty and homelessness, the, I would say, the weakness of the Church in Manhattan that was really an area of focus for Mac and Tim and Bob... and how those areas became the stubborn realities that there was a desire to really to see the needle move.

And in terms of an outcomes, Movement Day began to partner with Redeemer City to City, I would say, over 2010-2016 period where there was a real focus on church planting. There was funding available to support church planters. The Redeemer team led breakout sessions yearly at Movement Day that focused on church planting and there was an increase. I think we went from 3%-5% in terms of the growth of churches and believers within center city Manhattan. The high school drop-out rate decreased; the murder rate actually decreased. Now do we say that all of this is a result of Movement Day? No, it isn't. But it is the result of Christians being convened for prayer and to actively pray against these realities; Christians being mobilized to serve in terms of being of service to the city government, to the public-school system. You had a lot of church and school partnerships that were taking place. I think a

leader by the name of Jeremy Del Rio who we supported. He had a ministry called 20/20 Vision for schools and it was solely focused on church-school partnerships and you saw a lot of wonderful outcomes come out of the work that Jeremy was doing. And again, the culture of the city began to change where you saw that decrease in murder rates. You had city leaders that were not Christian, per se, but had a desire to clean up the city. I think about the Giuliani Administration. Although the Giuliani Administration represents much for many New Yorkers, but one of the things that we can all collectively say is that Giuliani and Mayor Bloomberg were very instrumental in cleaning up the physical demographic of the city. And Bloomberg, with creating a real business infrastructure within the city; creating a 3-1-1 system and so many other systems that support the infrastructure of the city and make city government more accessible to the residents. All of these things don't happen because someone had a light bulb go off in their head. I believe that when the body of Christ actively prays and really lives out the obedience of the Scriptures and the Great Commission... the Bible is clear. It says to seek the peace and prosperity of the city because when it prospers, then we too will prosper. And when you continue to have this kind of messaging reminding the believer of who we are - not just to personally flourish and prosper and have our own personal prosperity and "my four and no more" type of theology, but when we understand that we have a responsibility as Kingdom agents in the city, your leadership is different.

I would say the byproduct out of all of this is that we've seen a real strength within the marketplace ministries within the cities. There is a real network of Christian marketplace leaders that are finding and following their calling but understanding that their value in the body of Christ is more than just writing a check, that they are advancing the gospel and are leading gospel movements in their businesses and are exploring how they do that. And so all of this, I would say, have been outcomes of Movement Day: the strengthening of networks, the ability for the Luis Palau Association to stand on the strength of church unity within New York and host a campaign of service through New York CityServe and launching a city fest where there was, I believe, almost 10,000 decisions for Christ that were made for a year-long period. That's because there was a strong church in New York that was already in existence and that became accelerated by huge evangelistic and service efforts like what the Palau team was able to do. And so, all of these things, I think, are indicative of outcomes. And the strength of the church that we look at the formation of the pastor's prayer summit where next year in 2020 we'll celebrate its 30th year, where you have a network of about 300-500 pastors that are coming together yearly in this tri-state area - New York, New Jersey, Connecticut - that are meeting for 2-3 days for prayer. And it accelerates relationships when you get to see people and have a meal with them. All of that speaks to the strength and the health of a gospel movement within the city. So those are all outcomes that have allowed New York to become this springboard for a gospel movement, and also as a beaming example of what a healthy gospel ecosystem can look like within the city.

I would say another successful outcome is church-government relations. New York City has a clergy and advisory board in which Adam Durso who is the Executive Director of Lead NYC, as a pastor within the city, is a part of. So not only is he leading a parachurch ministry, but he also has the mayor's cell phone number and is a resource to the mayor of the City of New York. That's a significant outcome. One of the initiatives that now Mayor Bill de Blasio launched in New York was an emerging leaders' forum. It was an inter-faith emerging leaders' forum. But

it was the first time anyone in the city held such a forum that focused on impact on the younger leaders in the city and sought to be a bridge and connectivity in their leadership and becoming greater city servants. And now, where there was, let's say less than 5% of the mayor's yearly interfaith breakfast where there was less than 5% representation of emerging leaders, as a result of this clergy advisory board and this strength of relationship that Pastor Adam and so many other leaders on that board have been able to facilitate, there is now a 40% emerging leader representation at this now interfaith breakfast. So that just exposes the city and these leaders to a different level of service and leadership. And I think all of this is an outcome of intentional investment of Christian leaders within a city.

I would say that's solely for New York, but other outcomes are representative of Movement Day expressions globally. So now we have Movement Day expressions that are being hosted across 5 continents and there will be nearly 30 different Movement Day expressions in the year 2019. That's historic for Movement Day. We've never seen that many expressions before. There was a launch of Movement Day in Dubai, the first Movement Day in the Middle East, there will be new Movement Day expressions in New Zealand as well as Philadelphia, and a number of other cities that are escaping me at the moment. Naomi can give you all of the list of the Movement Day expressions. So that's a significant outcome of Movement Day. And it's for every city to define their own metrics and outcomes. I would say Charlotte has done a phenomenal job through their state of their city reports. They launched their first state of the city report with their inaugural Movement Day gathering in 2018. They just replaced a revised state of the city report for the gathering that they held two weeks ago and that speaks to the metrics of that city. And so, it looks different everywhere in terms of what the outcomes are because it's locally owned and locally led. Those would be some of the outcomes.

**BK: That's great. Thanks so much. I was at the Movement Day in 2015, that's when I first came and came back for the Global Cities and I was at that Launching for Movement Day expressions session. But I was just reminded that one of the things that you're helping to do is catalyze leaders to, instead of just leading their own organizations, to start thinking about leading the city. That was me in 2015. I had no intention of being involved necessarily in bigger city things. I was content leading my church and trying to figure that out. And then I was invited to Movement Day in New York and then I came back and thought may God is telling me something different. So, thank you for what you're doing.**

**ES: It's my honor to be a part of it and to have been a part of it.**

## APPENDIX C

### INTERVIEW WITH ADAM DURSO (MARCH 28, 2019)

**BK: Just for the record, can you state your name and current title and role?**

**AD:** I am Reverend Adam Durso. I am the Executive Director of LEAD.NYC. I serve on New York City's Mayor's Clergy Advisory Council for Mayor Bill de Blasio and I am an associate pastor at the Christian Cultural Center under the leadership of Dr. A.R. Bernard.

**BK: Great. Thanks. So how many Movement Days have you been responsible for in terms of leading and planning?**

**AD:** I have directly led two. I was involved in the 2016 gathering at the Javits Center as a consultant. I led the 2017 Gathering which took place at a hundred-year-old historic African American church in Harlem: Bethel Gospel Assembly, where we had fifteen hundred participants and four times more New Yorkers than had ever attended any Movement Day in previous history. That gathering was 85% New Yorkers and felt very New York unlike previous Movement Days that were held in New York; going all the way back to the very first one which was over 65% non-new Yorkers, which increasingly became an event that was in New York but not necessarily a New York event.

In 2017 we turn the tide on that and then 2018, we even went a step further by looking at it differently from purely a attendance numbers standpoint. What we realized was that having more attendees didn't necessarily increase influence. And so, we went to a model where we had 350 invited-only Christian leaders in the room, from pastors, marketplace leaders, nonprofit leaders, and city government. And that was a facilitated discussion around one hundred tables of four people at every table.

We designed it so that there was a stage in the middle of the room equidistant to every part of the room facilitated. Mark Matlock who came and spoke to us in Charlotte.<sup>30</sup> He led that for me. He and I have known each other for almost 20 years. And then the main talks were from the stage but they were only limited to less than 18 minutes per talk, and so it was mostly in the room discussion, people moving around, facilitated and then we left there with a very specific purpose around what collective impact would look like and what our game plan was next.

**BK: I'm really interested in your statement that "larger does not equal more influence." Could you talk more about that?**

**AD:** Absolutely. Just having more church goers in the room... that was great! And we loved it. And it was great that we had this expression of New York [in 2017] coming back to the room and we did some really creative things to make it feel very New York. Almost all of our speakers

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30. The author was part of a gathering in Charlotte, February 2019, for leaders of potential Movement Day expressions. Mac Pier, Ebony Small, Adam Durso, Rob Kelly and Mark Matlock were presenters at that gathering.

were New York centric - and when I say New York centric - I do mean metro New York. So, metro New York includes the five boroughs. It includes Long Island and it includes Southern Connecticut and parts of New Jersey. So, you had Dr. David Ireland from Jersey or Pete Scazzero from Queens, Dr. A.R. Bernard from Brooklyn. You had this collection of pastors from the region, marketplace leaders of the region, nonprofit leaders from the region, and then you had a lot of church folk, and that was great. We talked about some areas like at-risk-youth and kids being perpetually in a cycle, especially around our prison facilities. We did talk about why Empower Younger matters and why the dynamics of spiritual health matters to a leader. Those were great. But we really took the matter and changed it for 2018 when we decided - and that's where we're heading for 2019- but we decided, no, we want a smaller group and we want to really measure the kind of people in the room.

So, we had over 25% of the room, marketplace leaders. We wanted to make sure we had a good representation. Otherwise the room is just pastors and non-profit leaders. We had a great representation of city government leaders, from chaplains from the FDNY Fire Department, New York Police Department, and we had the head of Community and Faith Partnerships; Deputy Mayor Phil Thompson was there.

We wanted tables of 4 because we realized that anytime a table gets bigger than four, somebody stops talking. We facilitated in a way where introverts and extroverts both participated. 38% of the room were Millennial. I think, 32% of the room were female. That was something we were striving to increase because the average attendance for Movement Day five years ago was a 55-year-old white guy. And we needed to change that, and we figured if we got the right people in the room... and then we had looked at some of the research done by Stanford University around collective impact. What they said was that we needed four things: First, you need a backbone organization. That's where I feel that LEAD.NYC serves its greatest purpose. We are the backbone organization. We don't have a dog in the fight, and we don't have a pony in the race. We are just a multiplier for the other organizations and helping to convene them. And then you need three things: One, shared language, which the church does a pretty good job at. Two, a shared agenda, and we looked at what that agenda could be. And so, we targeted the ten most vulnerable zip codes in the metro NYC areas, and then the four areas where we can move the needle within those ten zip codes. One being high school graduation rates, two being teen pregnancy, three being the remedial Math and English scores of third graders. We know that they are building prison cells based on standardized testing of third graders. And [fourth], we were going to shut the revolving door in youth prisons. We know that on any given night, 85% of the kids who are locked up are from one of those ten zip codes.

So, we had shared language and we had a shared agenda. What we did not have, which I don't believe the church has done a great job of in large, has been metrics. We need shared metrics. How do we measure? How do we know that we're winning? How do we know we're making progress? If you're playing American football and if there's no yard markers to say we're making progress, how do you know you're moving the ball downfield? And because the church and its many forms - and when I mean church, I don't only mean local church, I mean non-profit and whatever the faith-based community is doing – it tells its story in testimony. It tells its story in, "Barry did...," "Adam was..." And we tell these great stories. That's great! The problem is that you can't measure it, and the government doesn't understand it and you can't prove ROI to the marketplace community. So, we looked at it and said "no," we need to come out of this

with a partnership on how to measure. And that was when I began a conversation with the founder of the Cinnamon Network UK. They had measured the impact of the faith-based community in 92 counties across the UK. The London Times put on the front page that “Loving our neighbors is free but in London it’s worth half a billion pounds.” And this past December, they came back and said that actually, loving your neighbor in the UK is worth 2 billion pounds a year. So, they’re actually proving to the government, who then reciprocating by reinvesting back in faith-based initiatives...that it’s 50 cents on the dollar. It’s cheaper to reinvest in the faith-based community that’s already doing the work than to duplicate the work based on volunteer standards and whatever it would cost the government to try to replicate those things. And they were measuring it. And we said, what if we launched this in America? And they said that they were planning on launching it and were looking for a host city. And we said, well, one caveat to all of this is that New York is first! We want to be the first group and first city that starts measuring in metrics the impact of the faith-based community. And that will launch this April. By the end of April, all the way through May, we will have launched the audits to measure the faith-based impact in both Washington Heights, which is uptown New York (uptown Manhattan), and East New York, Brooklyn, and we’ll have a baseline on how to move the needle. And then we’ll add two new zip codes each year after we launch the data on Movement Day in October. We’ll launch two new zip codes, which will probably be a piece of the South Bronx and then also the zip code of Patterson New Jersey, again as part of the metropolitan region. And so, we will launch two new zip codes while measuring the previous zip codes every single year for the next 5 years until they’re all launched, all 10 zip-coded launched, and then we will go for another 5 years on that trajectory, continuing to see how we move the needle.

**BK: Are you launching that this April or did it launch last April?**

AD: We launched it on, or announced it, last October. The audits will take place between October’s announcement and now and we have been raising the funds to finance the audits and on-the-ground street credibility work. One of the things that we realized in the research we had done, was that, whenever it feels like you’re doing it to them instead of with them, it’s far less successful. So, we were on the ground through Thanksgiving and through Christmas, still on-the-ground, and we’re showing up. New York CityServe was a group that the Palau Association launched here in New York as part of the lead up to the Palau Festival that they did in Central Park and their outreaches here. New York CityServe came under the auspices of LEAD.NYC about 15-16 months ago. That’s the kind of work that New York CityServe has taken on and done.

We’ve had two sub organizations that have come under LEAD.NYC in the last two years. One was CityServe. I was a co-chairman of the Palau Association festival. I was very much involved in all the New York CityServe events, and the facilitation of pastors reaching out to other pastors, connecting with them and building trust and relational equity to build their community.

And then about 9 months ago, concerts of prayer under New York came under LEAD.NYC’s leadership that’s been 30 years of the pastors’ prayer movement that’s been here in the city. Pastors praying together, groups meeting together. In the 29th year, it was the first time I led it. That was this past January, 250 pastors went away to pray together for 48 hours.

So the 29th year of pastor going away to pray together, we had over 250 pastors from every background you can imagine: Black, White, Asian, and Hispanic, every denomination you can imagine from Pentecostals to Presbyterian, Baptists, and Lutherans and - it was amazing and so that was my first year leading it - so really it's been the relational equity of those groups that we've utilized to accelerate the impact in those specific areas.

**BK: So LEAD.NYC is now the main organization running, if you will, Movement Day in New York? And Movement Day Expressions are everything outside of New York?**

AD: Yes. So, Movement Day Expressions encapsulates what we do, everything from connection to Movement Day Charlotte or Dallas to Movement Days in UK, Australia, Hong Kong, and Movement Day Dubai that was just a week and a half ago... all of those.

**BK: What's the name of the organization that you're using to get those metrics?**

AD: Cinnamon Network. Now it's Cinnamon Network U.S. And their founder was just here. We do something called the Influencers Forum and we do something called a Catalyst Dinner. We do them both in February and they're on back-to-back nights. The Catalyst Dinner is all marketplace leaders and we gather together in a private room in a steakhouse and talk about investment in the Kingdom leveraging their secular marketplace influence for Kingdom progress. And then we gather the Influencers Forum. It's all Non-Profit Executive Directors, so we had 45 of the most influential Non-Profit Executive Directors. The new guy who is leading the Cinnamon Network U.S. came in for that - former green beret did nine tours overseas; Incredible guy - came in and shared. We had basically a 6 hour-7 hour day of just planning, collaborating with everybody from Young Life, to Cru, to Youth For Christ, to Nyack College, and the Community of Faith Partnerships in the Mayor's office here all staying in the room all day long and talking about what it looks like for us to work together. And then that night, celebrated over at a dinner that we hosted for them. And so Cinnamon Network U.S. was in the room and kind of gave us the nuts and bolts. Here's how the audits work and here's what we were thinking, and we think by June we're going to get some raw data back. It'll give us the summer to really hone the data and pair it up with what the Mayor's office's data and what they're looking at, so we have a good benchmark to measure it up against. And then our hope is by September we'll be able to roll out the data and an action plan on the first two zip codes, and then officially launch all of the data and the results and the next step game plan on Movement Day in October 2019.

**BK: The influences Forum...it sounds almost like a mini-Movement Day?**

AD: It does. But it's just for nonprofit leaders. I think it's important that all of the subgroups in Movement Day have a chance to get together within their specific sphere so that Movement Day is almost a celebration of them getting together in one room. But it's not the only time those subgroups see each other. So, at Movement Day you'll have pastors, church leaders (Catholics and Protestants, etc.), non-profits, marketplace leaders, and city government leaders, right? But when I gather them at other times, it's just those specific spheres alone.

**BK: So, the pastors meet at the pastors' prayer summit?**

AD: Yes, in January and I do something called the 30-For-30 in June. 30-For-30 is 30 of the most

influential Senior Pastors from the Metropolitan region. These 30 pastors, when we went away last June, not only did they say they spent more time together in those 30 hours than previous years combined, they also represented an accumulative attendance of 250,000 congregants. They go away. It's completely underwritten. The only two rules are: you cannot come late or leave early and you cannot send anyone in your place. So, we have this Pastor's Prayer Summit in January. It's 250+ pastors and leaders, and then you've got this 30-For-30; it's just them and it's your most influential senior pastors from the region getting together, spending time and just being with each other. It's a time to bless them. And the third time they get together in their rhythm is Movement Day.

For non-profit leaders, they're getting together at the Influencers' forum. They're getting together for when we host 11 sites for the Global Leadership Network, formally the GLS. And we host those in August. So that's their second time that they get together. They're training together and their teams are meeting together.

And the marketplace leaders have their Catalyst Dinner in February and they do, what we call, an Executive Summit, which is kind of built around Movement Day, which is just for business leaders. And then they're at Movement Day.

**BK: So, they only meet twice a year. The Executive Summit is back-to-back with Movement Day?**

AD: There are three events, but two are back to back. And the caveat with marketplace leaders is that they're not paid to show up to any of these other events. To some extent, a non-profit leader is on the clock, the pastor is still on the clock when they show up at one of these events. The congregations are sending them<sup>31</sup> and their nonprofits are sending them. When a marketplace leader shows up, they're taking time away from their family or they're taking time away from their job to show up at those events. It's partly why we've constructed Movement Day back to being a one-day event instead of a multi-day event. It's on a Friday because, from our research, it's the best day, they're most likely to take a day off. As opposed to when we did it on a Saturday, we realized that they are not going to come back to the city - if they have a house that's somewhere outside of the city - on a Saturday. If it's on a different day of the week, it's very tough. If we can keep it to Friday and keep everything on Friday, the executive summit has tweaked to being on a Thursday night or Friday night. So they are back to back. But they are separate. We've been deciding what's the best way to get those marketplace leaders in the room.

**BK: What were the nuts-and-bolts in terms of getting all these New Yorkers together? Movement Day's been very global until 2016. What was that process like as you were looking at 2017? How did you get the New Yorkers to come?**

AD: A couple things. One is, when we were leading up to 2016, we were looking at the reality that we were doing this in New York and it was for the globe, and it was a lot of these other cities coming, but we needed to increase traction. And I really appreciate Mac Pier, Craig Sider, Ebony Small, looking at those in the face and saying that there is something we need to

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31. Not all congregations or pastor would agree with this!

address. I was brought in as a pastor that has pastored for 20 years in New York, I pastored with my dad a year, and built this huge youth group in New York City... New York Times was talking about crime rates dropping in Brooklyn and Queens in direct proportion to the amount of kids coming to the building...I mean, I'm a New Yorker! And so, when they were looking at it, and asking me to sit in the room, I was sitting in the room like everybody else, just throwing out ideas, "Hey, this has to be led *like* a New Yorker. It has to be led *by* a New Yorker, by somebody who's got the street credibility of New York." The bottom line is, no matter what city you're in, especially New York, which tends to be increasingly myopic - it's the only city that has a song written about it, "New York, New York" - like we believe that if you're from New York, there is a level of street cred. I think there's something like that about Boston and something like that about other cities. But it's very, very, very high on the appreciation chain. They value that really highly and so, I'm sitting in the room and one of the rooms that we were in, kind of think tanking this, and Craig said, "You know you realize that you're describing yourself, right?" and I was like "no I wasn't thinking that at all... I was completely thinking something else!"

So, one, I think it was the reality of looking at it, and two, it was that we needed somebody who's from New York, and three, what we learned was that we needed to have the backing of the gatekeepers. And that was huge. So Pastor AR Bernard who is my pastor, been my mentor, his son Jamal who is the senior pastor of the campus in Long Island, Dr. David Ireland who has the largest church in New Jersey, Pastor Jon Tyson, who's got Church of the City, Pastor Marc Rivera, who is maybe the most influential Hispanic pastor in the city in Lower East Side...tremendous credibility with constituents all over the city. These guys all pretty much had said, "Yeah, if Adam does this, we're behind it." There's no substitute for that. You can try to push your rock uphill if you want. But once you get those guys to say, "Hey, we're in and we're behind this and we think this is something," you're not forcing it on them, and I think that changed the game for me. And then Pastor Keller, and figuring out what his play and what his role was, and Redeemer's role...they have been phenomenal. City to City has reengaged. Pastor Tim Keller is doing the opening talk at Movement Day 2019. That group, they've got 17 church planters going through our Advanced Leadership Intensive. Once you have those guys involved, it makes the job whole lot easier and those guys have been really great.

**BK: What was the process like going from 2017 to 2018, in terms of deciding that we need to make this smaller? How did you end up with *that* room?**

AD: So, we've come out of 2017 and everyone is cheering this thing and our board said that this is the first New York Movement Day. I mean, the other Movement Days were in New York, but this felt like, man, this feels really New York! And I was just walking away from it, excited about all of that, and yet saying, "I don't know if this is how we're going to move the needle. I don't know how we're really going to make traction on some of the big ideas," and so we're kind of contemplating it... And then what happened was we were getting down to the Catalyst Dinner and Influencers Forum in 2018, and we were like, "Should we have a speaker?" And a good friend of mine, Mark Mattlock, who's been the President with Youth Specialties...well actually it was one of the national guys at IJM that said to me, "Hey Adam, why don't you ask Mark to come in?" and I was like, "Duh!" I mean, I've known Mark for 20 years and it never dawned on me. So, I brought him in, and we didn't bring him in as a speaker, but we brought him as a facilitator. We wanted to mine the room. One of the thoughts we came away from this was,

"What if the room is smarter than any one person we put on the platform?" And so, it started changing. Well now we just need the right people in the room because the right people in the room are going to be smarter than the best person, we put up there. And what we saw coming out of the Catalyst and Influencers Forum was that the concerns that the marketplace group had and the concerns that the non-profit group had, there was very clear overlap. This seems like this might be the spot for LEAD.NYC to fill. They need a backbone organization, they need somebody to say, "Come on, let's all get in the room." And they need somebody to set the agenda. Somebody's got to get in there and help set the agenda and language and especially the metrics. And then we started reading the stuff about collective impact from Stanford and that really started influencing our decision making and so by the time now, we go from, end of February to beginning of March - Catalyst Dinner and Influencers Forum, and now we're at like June. And we still didn't really know what Movement Day NY was going to look like, and we're thinking, man, we are really behind the eight ball on this. We need to get some speakers...

[But] it was really clear that it was more about the experience than it was just about the speakers. And although we needed some speakers in the room because some people were just going to be drawn by the speakers, and then experience it, we knew we really needed to work on the experience. So we started to look at everything you heard from Mark in Charlotte and we started to empathy map, what those constituents will feel when they come in, what they'll feel during and leaving, and who are those right constituents because now you're paying as much attention to who's attending as you are to who you're inviting as speaker because if the room doesn't have enough of that, it's really difficult to recreate that electricity and then we kind of started realizing that we didn't want green rooms. We wanted all the speakers to be in the room for the day. And that was an intentional thing. And then Mark came up with this brilliant phrase; he was like, "We want to harness coffee break energy" and I was like "What?" and he's like "Yeah there's the energy that the minute the break comes the volume goes up and everybody's charged...what if we could figure out a way to bring that coffee break energy into the sessions?" And then it was on.

The biggest concern I had was that it was such a hard and drastic change. I was wondering, "Am I going to get fired the next day?" I mean pretty much, I was wondering if I'm going to walk in, there's crickets and the board is just looking at me like "What did you do, Adam? You've completely ruined our brand!" And I joked with the board because I had a dream the night before, Movement Day...where I was walking in the board meeting and nobody would look at me and they just had their heads down and tagging it. Mark calls me up and he's like "Adam, I had a dream last time" and I'm like "Don't tell me man, don't tell me."

And then it became what most of the team felt like was the best Movement Day we've ever had. And we had really accomplished much of what we wanted to accomplish. We had a clear trajectory, we had clear ownership and buy-in, we had something that could last for the next 10 years that we could work together on that's got real change and its measurable and sustainable, and we can move the needle together, and it's got spiritual implications as well as social justice ramifications. It went off like gangbusters. So, this year, it really is just about how we harness it and how we do we not mess up last year but push the envelope a lot further, which is what we're working on.

**BK: So, how, in terms of the four areas that you felt like you can move the needle 10 zip codes, how much of that had you already have figured out going into the last Movement Day?**

AD: No, that primarily came out of the gatherings we had done with the pastors, with the nonprofits and the marketplace leaders, separately.

**BK: Before Movement Day?**

AD: Yes.

**BK: And then what were the actual - I mean it's clear that there was a lot that came out of it and that you were really jazzed about it - but what were some of the specific things that came out of Movement Day 2018?**

AD: So what we needed to do was we needed to change the average speaker from being clearly and solely inspirational to being a little more professorial. We brought in speakers like Josh Crossman and Soong-Chan Rah, who are more professors giving data. They were the proof text for why the metrics matter, and why measuring matters. We had the founder of the Cinnamon Network there, and so the room felt like they could get their arms around it. Now it's a broader room than the 30 marketplace leaders, the 45 non-profit leaders I just had and the 30 pastors or whatever. It's 4 times the size of that but it's very difficult to come to a consensus in that room, unless you've got real buy in, first from the small groups [marketplace, non-profit and pastors]. And those subgroups provided a lot of the research and categorizing that we wanted to present in the room.

And then we started to say, okay, what is it look like for not only for us to provide the information, create the shared experience and buy in, but then put our money where my mouth is? And so, we regranted all of the money that came in the registration back to those two zip-codes and we were able to announce that at that place.

I think we'll move the needle further next year. Some of it took us time to just onboard...because people walked in that morning and they were expecting a typical Movement Day, and then they're like "What's this? Why is there a stage in the middle of the room? Why are there four screens so that no matter where you look, you're seeing a screen? Why...?" Building all of that out was partly just having to onboard them to a new experience, which took probably, most of the morning: the introverts to feel comfortable enough that they weren't freaking out that there were going to be at a table all day; extroverts, to get them to quiet down long enough so they can listen to the introverts... which, as an extrovert, I had never really considered before, so it was pretty awesome to really walk through that. Mark is an introvert and intentionally is very good at bringing that out.

So we had gotten the zip-codes and the four pieces from those subgroups, we're bringing in the room so that everyone would have the buy-in so everyone can have joint ownership, to come out of the room saying "Okay so now what are we going to do on-the-ground for the first two zip-codes that we're going to launch." Does that make sense?

**BK: It does make sense. Did you have follow up meetings immediately after?**

AD: Oh yeah. Especially in the two zip-codes that we were launching. That's where we primarily focused our efforts. Zach Lembke, who is on my team full-time, literally his entire job [starting]

the next week was all about the ten zip codes, faith audits and how do we immediately start making investments. We had done the homework beforehand, so we knew who had credibility. I think that's the benefit of having a leader who has been in the city for 23 years because you do know who the key players are. You know who has been really faithful. You know who has done some great work, and they're not just tooting their own horn but they're really doing some great work that's pushing and moving the needle. But yeah, we had immediate follow-up.

I mean, we did that the last week in October and by Thanksgiving we were giving out turkey dinners and groceries and we were honing in on prayer meetings that were already happening there, and we were meeting in East New York around Christian Cultural Center and their influence in East New York. And the largest youth prison facility in the city is in East New York, you know, and what mentoring was looking like they are.... Yeah.

**BK: If I could actually ask you to step back and maybe think more theologically or philosophically. One question I've been asking everyone is, how are you defining city gospel movement? And then how do you see this last Movement Day and what you're trying to do 2019? What are the dynamics in terms of accelerating that gospel movement?**

RK: Well, I think in "city gospel movement" is in and of itself, the definition. One is, it's got to be in the city. And one is, it's got to be indigenous leadership in the city. Mac Piers always says that what God wants to do in the city is already in the hearts of leaders in that city. I think there's help that can come from the outside. I think there's gasoline that can be poured on the fire from the outside, but I really genuinely believe that the city gospel movement has to start with city leaders from that city. Two, it's really got to be about the gospel. I think too many guys have gone so social justice-oriented; they've left the gospel out. And at the end of the day if our motivation is not the gospel, then we're just improving people's lives as they are on their way to hell. And that's a sad reality. If we leave the gospel out of it, now, does that mean that I only work with people that agree with me theologically? No. If Joseph waits for Pharaoh to agree with his own theology, he never sees Israel. I don't think Nehemiah was waiting for... I don't think Daniel was waiting for ....there's a place where you've got to work with people that have differences of opinion and view. And I would say Mayor de Blasio probably doesn't agree with me on my points of theology and yet I respect him and his heart for the city and he respects me in my heart for the city. I mean, I've had few better advocates than Mayor de Blasio here. He's awesome. Deputy Mayor Phil Thompson. But at the end of the day, they know it's about the gospel and it's not about the minute details of and nuances of the areas we don't agree on. It really is about the gospel. So, I'm okay working with people that we don't agree on everything on theologically. One of my really good friends is a guy named Colin. He heads up young adults for the Archdiocese here and reports directly to Cardinal Dolan. Cardinal Dolan's become a friend. The Archdiocese, the Catholic Church, they have become friends and they are wanting to work. They are in the room for Movement Day there. I mean, our guy Zach who is working on the ten zip codes, right now is meeting with Colin about how the Catholic church can be more involved in the ten zip codes. It's about the city, it's about the gospel, a wholistic gospel where Jesus is incarnated into the neighborhood and we are the visible representation of an invisible God.

And it's got to have movement. I mean, if you're drumming it up, if you're pushing it along, if it only has your agenda behind it, it's not a movement. Movements are messy. Movements are not really tremendously well organized. I think there's a great quote - I forgot who said it – “Wherever the Apostle Paul went, there was either a riot or revival and sometimes both.” I think there's got to be that. I think meetings that have no heat to it, when iron sharpens iron, sparks fly. Sometimes there's heat, other times there's revival, other times there's riots, but at the end of the day, there is an energy behind it. And there are people calling themselves a city gospel movement who are not in the city, who are not about the gospel and there's no movement! There's no wind in the sails! The sails are dead!

I believe with all my heart, when you look at a city gospel movement, it should be visibly evident that in that city gospel movement, it is in the city, from indigenous city leadership from across government, marketplace, nonprofit church leadership, and it should be about the gospel. If it's not, you're just a social institution. The gospel is the differentiator and two and three, the movements are messy. And it's okay that it's not clearly defined, and the org charts look messy and the flow charts don't look like they should. Stuff happens in movements, but because it's organically a movement, it's propelling the thing. It's not just sitting there, anchored in the middle of nowhere between where it left and where it wants to go. The ships are moving because there's wind in the sails. I didn't go to theological school; I got an honorary doctorate in divinity. I went to business school. But when I look at city gospel movement, those are the three components I'm looking at.

**BK: How do you see Movement Day playing a role catalyzing and accelerating gospel movement?**

AD: Well to socially impact their cities? Yeah – LEAD.NYC's mission statement is to nurture leaders in the community for the gospel transformation in greater New York City. When I look at LEAD.NYC, we are nurturing leaders in the community. So, we don't do anything in isolation. If you're looking at an advanced leadership intensive, we have 68 students, two cohorts, an afternoon cohort, and an evening cohort for bi-vocational students, they're doing it together. They're not just building a 5-year mission to measure a 5-year plan, they're building it together. It's done in community. Movement Day is about doing it in community. Nonprofit leaders in community, pastors in community. For the gospel transformation, the city can be transformed by the power of the gospel. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. It in and of itself has what it needs to transform a city. And we are clearly and unapologetically focused on metropolitan New York City. It's the 5 boroughs, it's Long Island, it's Southern Connecticut, it's Jersey- that's what it is. If you ask me what's happening in Massachusetts, I would be the first guy to be like - Man, I'll come up and support you. I'll be the first guy to root you on, I'll tell you what we're doing down here but these leaders - my team - they're New Yorkers, they're young and hungry to see God do something in our city.

So, I would say I can speak less to the missional modus operandi of Movement Day Expressions and say this is what LEAD.NYC is doing in New York. It's also far more filled out. You know, we have a year-round trajectory. It's not that there's Movement Day and we're leading up to that the 364 days of the year. We are, whether it's our monthly cohorts that are going through Advanced Leadership Intensive, or our internship experience, or the Global Leadership Network here or the 30-For-30 with those pastors or the Influencers Forum or the Catalyst

Dinner, we have got stuff that's going on where those leaders are... You know every first Thursday of the month, I host the prayer meeting at Calvary Baptist on 57th street, historic church from 8-9am. We're praying together with 3 dozen leaders from across the city. And then we go out for pancakes afterwards. You know, the 250 pastors that go away for Concerts of Prayer, the nurturing that's happening through New York CityServe - all of that kind of fleshes out what's happening - so it doesn't become Movement Day as a destination but Movement Day every year becomes a catalytic event to propel the next year as opposed to well we got here. It's not about getting here, it's about the runway and a launching pad for the next thing.

**BK. Okay. So in terms of getting into this positive cycle, what do you think are some of the critical elements that need to be in place for a city that is considering doing a Movement Day?**

AD: I think it has to be rooted in pastors that have, in some form or another, begun to form trust with each other. Wherever there's competition, it will erode at the relational equity that's necessary to get this off the ground. In our case, we had a 30-year prayer movement that had gathered pastors who had been praying here. I know pastors in Patterson, NJ or Portland, OR and other places where they've been doing that. Some of it's been the rhythm of pastors going away to pray together like we have in our Pastors Prayer Night, but I don't believe it has to be that.

There are other expressions of it. I know pastors that are gathering for a once a month breakfast and I know they've been meeting for years. I know pastors that have been spending time with each other, facilitating fellowships. The movement really moves forward at the speed of trust, it just does. Because otherwise, if you don't have that, the minute the first hiccup comes, you derail the whole thing. Relational equity is what lubricates the cogs of ministry. So that when the cogs are moving and the mechanics and machinery is moving, if there is no relational equity, then as the friction gets hotter, you will see it actually come to standstill and it will come to a breakdown. And so, the question becomes, "How does a city inspire relational equity and trust building?" And then you can take it from there. Everything else can come along later. If the gatekeepers of the city are not committed to building that trust and only want to work within their specific denomination, only want to work within their own deal, that becomes very, very difficult too. I haven't experienced that here. I think the reason why this has taken off so fast and the reason why New York has accelerated so quickly, especially when we became very New York centric in the last years, it was not because it was always here, it was because Tim Keller, AR Bernard, David Ireland and other guys were like, we're committed to this and I think that's huge.

**BK: That's great. You've referred to the Stanford collective impact study a few times. When did that come out? I wonder how I can get access to that.**

AD: That's a good question, let me google it. A lot of it came out from Stanford and there's been a lot of articles that came out since then. The work by Josh Crossman has also been

phenomenal.<sup>32</sup> My guy Zach can probably send you the links. I think I have a copy of the collective appendix too. Here you go.

**BK: Thank you. Was this handed out on Movement Day?**

AD: We had 100 copies to hand out. But we used it as a pre-read. This was also the first year we initiated pre-reads on Movement Day which is pretty cool. We did that and I'm trying to remember the other piece. Did we do a chapter or a piece on collective impact? We basically started 3 weeks out, starting with sending a couple of previews that we wanted people to see when they walked in the room because we thought that would save time on onboarding people on where we were heading. And Josh gave his talk in 18 minutes.

Dave Kinnamon was there via video from Barna. He's now the president of the Barna Research group. He shared about the importance about going younger. You had Gail Bantum from Quest church, she talked about the role of women in the church and about women leadership. Soong-Chan Rah talked about the migration of Europeans around the globe and how that's impacting cities. Jon Tyson did an opening devotional. We tried to be as creative as we could. When we got to the last session, basically we introduced Cinnamon Network and founder Matt Bird, he talked about what they had done in the UK, and then Bishop Claude Alexander came up and basically gave why the faith based audit is as much a spiritual component because of the audit that will ultimately be done on the day we stand before the throne.

**BK: That's good.**

AD: It was really good. It was not bad. He's a rock-star. Anything else?

**BK: I think that's it. Thanks so much!**

AD: Awesome, man!

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32. Pinetops Foundation, "The Great Opportunity: The American Church in 2050", [www.greatopportunity.org](http://www.greatopportunity.org), 2018.

## APPENDIX D

### INTERVIEW WITH MARK ALEXANDER (MAY 16, 2019)

**BK: Just for the record, can you state your name and your role with Movement Day?**

MA: Sure Mark Alexander- actually my legal name is David M Alexander. I am the Executive Director of Movement DFW. So, I changed our name from Movement Day to MovementDFW to make it not look like we're just one day event a year. We're a ministry all year long.

**BK: The first question I wanted to ask was: How did Movement Day in Dallas begin? I did read the history on the website and the book but from your recollection, what was the impetus behind starting Movement Day in Dallas?**

MA: Sure. Of course, you know that Movement Day started in New York [in 2010] and of course the concern there was the lack of Christianity in Manhattan. I'm not sure even at that stage when they started that Mac had the vision that it would really grow around the world. I think at that time they were more focused on the needs of the city there. But it ended up where he was traveling to Dallas on a regular basis in the beginning because there were some funding opportunities to fund the New York operations. And as he began to talk to more and more people in our area, there was a strong interest from people that a Movement Day event taking place in Dallas, TX would be a good thing. So in 2013, he decided to bring on some consulting folks who were familiar with what was going on in the city and talk to a guy to name Jim Dennison who is a former pastor here in the area about what some of the biggest issues were in the city that needed help on and they ended up in 2014, having a Movement Day conference here. So, it was the first one for them outside of New York. Again, it was owned and operated by MOVEMENT.ORG and they were the one that managed it, based on the work that they were already doing in their city.

It was a huge splash. They came in strong. I usually think when you usually start something off, you start small and then work and build up to something larger. They did the opposite; they started really big. It was at the Dallas Convention Center. They had large name brand people come in, ended up having 1200 people there. Spent large serious money to do the event and so it was a name brand recognition kind of from the start so as you're saying in your city, you're trying to look at building up those relationships and ultimately having a Movement Day.<sup>33</sup> They came in and made a name for themselves that help start building those relationships more after the fact. So, we just finished our sixth one now.

**BK: When did you come on board?**

MA: Three years ago. So, the first three years of those conferences I did not attend those or be a part of those. I came on three years ago. So, year one of the operations here, they had consultants that they were paying to help make things run. Then in year two, they hired an Executive Director who was the elder of a large black church in the city and he stayed on for a

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33. Mark is referring to a conversation with the author prior to this interview.

few years and then they asked me to come in for, really, a free three-month consulting effort to understand what the future looked like for the organization and strategy and direction. And once I completed that, I determined that what would be good was that Dallas become its own independent 501c3 and not a business unit of New York - and that it should have its own local board here and Local Advisory Board. And when donations were asked for, they were given to a local entity versus... It was confusing for people on the donation side because you would give a donation to New York for the benefit of the Dallas area but obviously, that's what you would assume was happening, but it would confuse a donor here. But when I put together that strategy plan, I realized that the work that needed to be done and the timeline to afford having me and the current Executive Director on staff, probably the funding wasn't going to be there. So, I went off to do something else but two months later, he resigned, and they needed somebody, and Mac offered me the job as Executive Director here.

**BK: So, the first Movement Day that you organized was in 2016?**

MA: And the interesting thing there was...I came on board three months before the conference. You've seen some of these conferences...three months is not the right kind of time window to make that happen. But because in the previous years, we had been part of the New York operation, again which just at that point had become independent, I mean, had an affiliation agreement with New York. But the plan was that New York would still help us as they had in the previous years, with bringing in a production crew and helping with it. And so, while it was an overwhelming task for me in a three-month period to help go make it happen, I still had some benefit of Ebony Small being here and her associates, and some of their connections...so that made it still all work out okay. We pulled it off and it turned out great. But that was the last time that New York ever helped - that I'm aware of - a remote city again because they were starting to grow with expressions around the world and so those locations were all doing their own thing. So, have we since then.

**BK: I understand wanting to do the first one. What was the draw of repeating it every year?**

**What's the benefit you see in that having Movement Day in Dallas every year?**

MA: That's a good question. I think how it's supposed to work and should work is that really you work all year long to help unify the churches and have them work together, and go work on some of these common issues of the city...to really move the needle and make things happen. I'm trying not to make this a long-winded answer. But what happens today is that there's tons of churches, tons of money flowing to help with the causes of the community which are all good causes....lots of volunteerism, lots of other nonprofits doing work in this area, to the city doing work and marketplace leaders doing the work but these issues don't get fixed. So even though all this effort goes into it and obviously our belief is that we don't have to spend any more money, any more volunteer time, any more effort than we're currently spending today, we just need to do it together. And if we are all willing to step in and try to do something together then we can break chain in and get something done.

That work needs to go on throughout the year, so the Movement Day is a celebration of what happened last year, and it's a motivator to get everyone to come forth and really get involved the next year. So, the answer to your question, "Why do we do it annually?" It's to keep people motivated and going. And it's also to keep people informed because what you find

out is most of the issues in the city, people heard it in the news or something, but they don't live it, they don't feel it, they don't see it. And it becomes more personal when we have this gathering and they see videos and have discussions and talk and realize, "I didn't realize it was this bad."

Dallas is number three in the nation in childhood poverty and we're a very upwardly mobile city, and we're number three. We used to be number one. And I don't think people get that at all. And they go, "Whoa, I went to my church and gave \$50 to backpacks for kids to go back to school. I'm trying to do my part." And I'm like "Well, thank you! But that didn't help mentor that child or help that home get out of poverty, help that kid with food insecurity, help the parents get a job, it didn't help spread the gospel to that family...." So, I think a lot of hours is making sure that there is education that goes on that helps people understand that there is a need. And once they understand that there is a need, they're ready to jump in.

**BK: That's great. So, you talked about childhood poverty. What are some of the primary issues that you've been trying to address on Movement Day?**

MA: These aren't ranked in any particular order, but one is really city-wide spiritual transformation, and I would say this is probably the core of things. I believe one of the greatest pieces of that is a prayer movement. And another issue that we have that's strong that prevents spiritual transformation is a lot of racial reconciliation issues within our community. We had been developing... working with church pastors to start local community (because we're dealing with all of the DFW metroplex so that's actually quite a lot of space in a lot of different cultures). So, what's correct in Dallas is not necessarily the same in Fort Worth, and then all the surrounding suburbs that make up all of that community, they all have different...we have a lot of common issues but the priority of those are not always the same. But city-wide spiritual transformation is always there and always needed so we are setting up Pastor Coalition Groups in the different communities throughout the Dallas-Fort Worth area and we use those as a way to build trust in relationships and in understanding of what the needs are; what we've seen the needs are, and what the pastors are hearing in their community what they believe the needs are. And then that's where we're trying to push our agenda of a prayer movement, racial reconciliation, and then let me go on to the others.

So next one is childhood poverty because it's so significant in our area. Dallas-Fort Worth area is the number one refugee relocation center in the United States. So, we have a huge number of people coming into the community. Another one is early childhood education. One of the main scoring factors on how a child's life is going to turn out is third grade reading levels. This has been statistically determined. It's been statistically determined, too, that the government uses those ratings in those communities to understand how many jail cells to build in the state. I mean it's that strong of a tool. And 30% of the students in the DFW area can read at third grade reading level. And we're working with other parties to obviously help to change that significantly.

And that plays back into the poverty and the home life and the fatherless homes and jobs and food insecurity and all those other things that already going on. That's why those two can play hand-in-hand. Another initiative is that we've been working with the Green family with Hobby Lobby and *Every Tribe Every Nation* on this Bible Translation project that I think you probably heard about.

**BK: Yes.**

MA: So, Mark Green is working on the Bible translation piece, and his brother Steve Green is the one who built The Museum of the Bible in DC. They signed an agreement over the last three years with MOVEMENT.ORG to test drive New York and the DFW area, to go to the churches to promote and help fund bible translation. They are working with all the major Bible translation companies. And those organizations, a few years ago, said it would take another 200 years to get the rest of the Bibles in the world translated. And by unifying and working together and sharing code and sharing resources, they believe they can get it done by 2033. So, in our lifetime, we can meet the Great Commission that has been requested. So that's one of our initiatives - to go out and encourage both churches but also individuals to participate in Bible translation projects.

**BK: That sounds like an initiative that is looking outside of Dallas Fort Worth to the nations. Does it really impact Dallas Fort Worth as well in terms of refugees?**

MA: It is. So what I try to explain to people when I go see them is that - certainly that's a worldwide mission effort - but because I told you we were one of the largest refugee and immigration cities, there's approximately three hundred different languages spoken in most of our communities. And so, we already are that worldly city today and those same people need a Bible here that needed over in another foreign country that they came from. I think it still touches home even though it is an international effort. Another one that's come along...have you already heard Jurie Kriel talk about his story of Next Move yet?

**BK: I haven't. Next Move was the conference that Ebony was talking about in Charlotte? The one that was in Dubai?**

MA: Yes, so Jurie Kriel was a pastor and grew up in South Africa and then moved to the U.S. to Austin, TX and planted a church in downtown Austin, just within the last 6 months. It's called the 5twelve Church. And he has been integrating himself inside Movement Day. He did Movement Day a couple years in South Africa. But he's also integrating himself inside the MOVEMENT.ORG. And one of the greatest issues that's happening in the world today is that so many of the young people are leaving the church in droves. It's not just young people, lots of people are moving away from Christianity and Jurie believes that - well many people believe - Jurie's just professing that - that if we continue to allow the current trajectory to go along where the elder Christians die out and there's fewer and fewer of the younger Christians coming to faith, then we'll go into a dark ages in the world, if we don't do something about it.

So Next Move is an initiative where he took 10 significant global young leaders who are already important in their community and then, back in March, he had that group go look for others and they grew that to 85 and met in Dubai in March. Next year, in New York, they're going to grow it to 500. And again, these are already existing strong young Christian leaders influential in their communities. And the hope, then, in 2022, instead of me having a Movement Day in Dallas, that we will have a Movement Day but it'll be focused on this Next Move Movement where we hope to have 5,000 people, young leaders globally around the world to go out and work together but make a difference in the world and changing the landscape of what Christianity is for the young.

**BK: That's great. What's the age range that you're defining as young?**

MA: Millennial and younger. That's why I hate to start throwing out all the different names. I'm just going to use the word young people... but Millennial and younger.

**BK: With each of these issues, were there specific numeric targets that you had? Was there specific metrics that you were measuring for each of these?**

MA: So, that's probably one of the hardest things about this organization. Normally a nonprofit will have programs that they offer...specific programs they offer that people can be involved in and give to and have metrics around those programs. We don't have programs, so the best metric that I can give right now....well...two different areas. Internally, I think, the best metric I have is the number of churches and pastors that are part of our trusted network. So, I think that is internally, that's one of the bigger ones, I believe, that makes a difference.

Externally on these particular programs, because we work with different partners who are helping and trying to go drive change in those areas, and these obviously take some time, but I can say the statistic in this year on the number of third graders in the DFW area who could read a third reading level is blah and a year later, it's this. You can't say that, I can't say that, MovementDFW made that change, I can say that we helped to try to drive that change. A lot of people were involved in that. But the answer is, that's tough because when you try to bring in donations, and you can't give those really hard-core stats, so someone's got to buy into the ministerial vision of what you're trying to do. For instance- or most churches, first thing they ask you is - and you did the same thing today - how many people are coming to your church regularly? Does that mean that there are 450 people who profess Christ this last year because of your ministry or you just had 450 people coming to your church regularly? You know? So, you can talk about that membership, but is that really a good metric? But that's the metric that everybody uses. But it's really about how many people are coming to Christ is changing their lives and they're going out and changing other people's lives. That's the metrics that you need, but that's not the metrics that's used. So, my point with MovementDFW is that it's really a broader effect of, "Are we really changing the lives of the people in the city, or are we not doing that?" And that takes all of us. So, I can't really give you that metric exactly.

**BK: Yes, I mean some of these goals...like racial reconciliation...how do you measure that?**

MA: You don't.

**BK: Yeah, but I do remember that, I think it was Jim Denison's report and statistics that he reported to Mac, those were very compelling.**

MA: Yeah.

**BK: And I think if there was a way to track those numbers, year on year, that could be something.**

MA: Yeah. that that was my point. It has been something and that is some of what we did. We had Jim do the original list and then we had him do a revised list a couple of years ago. But looking at the broader space of how things were changing the city, whether negatively or positively, is the best way to do it. But I still have to say that we're not directly impacting that

specifically. I believe we're making a big difference in that...but you can't say these things improved because of MovementDFW. You have to be really careful not to take credit for stuff.

**BK: Right, especially yeah there's so many other parties involved. Like you said, you can say this is what we're working on and this is what we've seen happen since we started working on it and we may have played a part in that. So, one of the phrases that Movement Day at least in New York likes to use is gospel movement and city gospel movement. I did notice that on the MovementDFW's website, the tagline is a little different in that instead of "accelerating and catalyzing the gospel movement", it says "a catalyst for the advancement of the gospel." I'm not sure if that was very deliberate. But would you mind talking about your understanding of city gospel movement and perhaps why you didn't use that phrase if there was something intentional about that?**

MA: Well, for one, I believe... it's interesting what we do because it is all about a city gospel movement and what we really do is... we try to unite churches and people together to go work on some of these greatest issues in the city, but ultimately, what we're trying to do is build those relationships between those people which solves racial reconciliation. I mean, it's relationship-building and spreads the gospel between those people. But ultimately what we're trying to do is get them to work on all these things, because as they solve these problems, they're out sharing the gospel with people who may not have heard that at all or had the opportunity. And you had to do that by building up a trust relationship. So if you're going to go and help a family who is in poverty, who may be Christ-centered or not, it takes that time and effort and mentoring and sharing of the gospel with them, and loving on that family and giving them... finding resources to help them get out of poverty but it's a relationship that you end up building with them. And so, we always have to be careful that people today just want to write a check: "I helped that family. I gave \$100...look how much better off there because I gave my hundred-dollar check to them." Well, that didn't minister to that family. It may have helped them with something, but it has to be a gospel movement.

**BK: That's good.**

MA: And we also have a tagline in our site. I don't know if that helps or not. "Inspire, Collaborate, and Accelerate." I don't know if you saw that, but I tried to find some words that help describe us little bit. I don't know if those do a good job or not.

**BK: I liked what you said from the get-go, that it's not a single day but it's a movement.**

MA: That's why we had to change our name. I mean, honestly, after doing this for a while, they go, "Oh yeah, you're that group that has that conference once a year." And that almost makes me not want to have it... because if that's all that they think we are, we're doing a huge disservice to the community. And that's why I wanted to change the name.

**BK: I'm going to transition to questions specifically about running the conference. And understanding that it is a year-long process and Movement Day is just a part of that, but what have been the greatest challenges in running Movement Day in DFW?**

MA: Well, the biggest challenge is that I'm the only employee. And so, the work that we need to do, it's very hard to have success with it with only one person. So that's one of the big

challenges and then probably another big challenge for us is funding because describing our story without being a hard program that we offer with stats, is also difficult. So those are two things on that- but ask your question again because you were really talking about the conference.

**BK: Yeah, so the first conference, there were 1200 or so. How many came to the last one?**

MA: 680. 800 registered, and 680 showed up.

**BK: And in terms of your goal of every year of informing the participants and motivating them and informing them to work on these different issues, what are the challenges in bringing that group together? How do you make sure you're getting the right people in that group?**

MA: That's the million-dollar question. So, I've brought in some strong well-known speakers from outside the Dallas area and you've heard some promising comments about those and then you've heard negatives on... "I really think you should respect and bring around those people in our own area who are having the success and we don't need someone from outside." There's a little balance of that.

The other is bringing in people who really can inspire about the topic that is going on. They already have to have a...they might be a really good person, but if they're not trusted in the community that the work that they're doing makes a big difference, then it won't mean as much. Someone can be a great speaker and rattle off all the stuff, but they have to have that relationship. And for me, the biggest piece though is weaving it all together. I've got to work with them so that the stories are...you don't want them to get up and start doing an infomercial about what they do but it can talk about what they do. But what you really have to do is weave a story through so that it looks like one total...we're working on a united front...we're working all together. Even though everybody's talking about their pieces, it's one overall united effort that is happening, and that by having this one united effort, we're going to really change the city.

**BK: Do you face questions or challenges in terms of the vision? What are the challenges in terms of unity in Dallas?**

MA: The answer is: we have a big challenge because I can't say [to people] that we're a ministry where we want to go change third grade reading levels throughout the DFW area and that we offer reading programs in 400 schools and if you want to be a volunteer and be a part of that and be in that ministry, and I can tell them all about that. And you can sign up right here, and you can be part of the ministry and you can make a change. But that's not what we do, again. Because we don't offer a program.

So our biggest challenge which is in the vision is, when you tell people that you're going to get churches to start breaking down their siloed walls and working together with other churches, and they're coming as a group of Christian people to go change the city, that's just kind of hard for people to grasp sometimes. I mean, I think they can hear that, but I don't think they exactly know what that means. And that's why these pastor relationships and building these pastor coalitions where we meet up regularly to build that trust and relationships and they want to be part of this, that's so key, because I could never get them to go do all this stuff. If I just started going church hopping, and going into your church, I sat down and I talked about

this, that wouldn't be the same as if there were 12 other people, other pastors just like you, and y'all were brainstorming about doing something together. That makes all the difference. I don't know if that helped or not.

**BK: Yes! How many pastor coalitions do you have?**

MA: We're working in more county specific areas. The counties in the DFW area are Dallas, Tarrant, Collin, Denton, but inside those - some of them - the communities are different enough where you have a couple inside that county so that you're really meeting the needs of that area. So for instance, yesterday I was in McKinney, which is in Collin County, which is a suburb of the DFW metroplex, but it's a fairly good-sized suburb and they really want to do something just for the City of McKinney, even though it's in a county that's larger than that. In many cases, we're trying to do something that's more city focused. And one other place I've found a huge need is because I've found that there is such a change in population in racial diversity is we have a huge growing Hispanic group of people here and the Latino churches, overall, really need to have an organization that's just for Latino churches, that's not really geographically based as much as the other pastor stuff was...because they have their own special need.

**BK: Right. I would imagine that language is a big challenge if you're trying to get churches across all of these ethnic groups potentially working together.**

MA: Yeah. And - this is where I step on myself - I can say this to someone like you - I wouldn't tell it to other people - but we kind of have to stay in the middle of the road a little bit so we're not going way out on the fringes of churches that are divisive that could break the group apart. And I'm not deliberately trying to go exclude those, but I can't have unity if I'm going to have division. I've got to stay somewhere in the middle section of it all, so that we can have this trust and open conversation.

**BK: What are some of issues that in Dallas that you try to avoid?**

MA: Well, I'm not really working with the Catholic church for instance. In fact, it was just in the newspaper today where the Dallas Police went and had a warrant and got files from the Dallas Diocese office. It was on the front page of the paper, over all that sex abuse stuff because they felt like they were not being fair and open with them on the records that they were providing them, and so they went and took all the records from them. And anyway, so that's happening, I mean there's a whole issue with that everywhere, that's not just a DFW area issue, but I would say that we probably don't really engage hard with the Catholic church as an example.

**BK: One of the issues that are potentially divisive in Boston, well it's not potentially divisive, it is divisive, is our theology on human sexuality. Is that an issue on Dallas as well?**

MA: Oh yeah.

**BK: Do you just avoid that conversation and just say that we're going to agree to disagree on this and say there is bigger fish that we need to fry?**

MA: Well certainly, that one is so broad that it runs through all church denominations and so it's definitely a part of what we're in. One is, it's not one of our initiatives that we're trying to focus on inside the city, and really what I try to talk about when that subject comes up is that

we're trying to be loving Christian people to everyone, and we realize that people may have different views on that. I personally believe what the Bible says about that topic. But we want to be a loving Christian family to everybody. But I try not to get into some heated debate over the whole thing because it's one that breaks churches apart everyday around here. Again, I tried to keep us focused on issues that we can come to in a unified fashion and not one that's going to cause division between everyone.

**BK: So, very quickly, what are the 5 most critical considerations that a city needs to consider as it prepares to host Movement Day? If you could give advice to Boston, or other cities that might be considering their own Movement Day - what would you say are five things (you don't have to have five, but limiting it to five), what are five things that they should be thinking about?**

MA: Well one, I think you need to, again if you're going to be doing what other cities are doing on Movement Day, you would try to determine what the greatest needs are in the city and get some strong factual leaders in the city and evaluate and come up with what you believe you want to invest your time in. Second, you've got to build up those relationships in the city before you start launching something. So getting close to some city leaders, getting close to some public officials, getting close to a number of core pastors, understanding who some of the best practice practitioners are in the city that can help solve some of those problems that you've identified as your main issues, and getting closer to them. And building an awareness of what a gospel movement is. I guess what's different for you - I mean, there are a lot of other gospel movements going on - so what's different with you? For instance, we had Greg Lawrie here this year with Harvest America, and I was on his advisory board and they had their conference... and it's a wonderful ministry, and it is a gospel ministry. But that's not the gospel ministry we're trying to do. We're not trying to hold at a huge sports facility and go fill it up and have a speaker and to bring everyone up front. I mean, that's not the goal of our gospel movement. So, you have to explain the difference about this gospel movement and why it is needed. And the fact is that I don't know of anyone else who is trying to go knock down the walls of churches and bring churches together to work together as "the" church. I don't know of anybody else who is really trying to do that. But that's what Jesus said he wanted us to do.

Another thing I would say is be careful when you're trying to hold your event. The location of the event is important, both geographically and trying to show some independence. I mean, we've had them in churches and non-church environments. It has to be a place where everyone feels welcomed there, and doesn't feel that it's driven by...let's just say if you're going to have it at a megachurch, which we've done before, then does it look like it's all about them? You just have to be careful that it still looks like you're the independent party that's pulling everybody together. So, the last two years, we've had it at Dallas Baptist University, and I agree, it's Baptist, okay, but I think it felt like a more independent location and was not as cold as a convention center or a hotel ballroom or something like that.

**BK: I'll give you an opportunity to boast a little, but what has been the gospel impact of Movement Day in DFW? Are there things anecdotally or statistically that you can point to,**

**without necessarily claiming credit for it all, that you feel like that Movement Day has been instrumental?**

MA: One is...there was a young man who grew up in a racially diverse family and he was on... I told you in the very beginning we didn't have any people and so we had some consultants come in, and his name was Grant Skeldon. He came in and helped us do the very first Movement Day event and then became involved in some of the work we do on some of our initiatives, and it ended up helping him spawn his own non-profit called Initiative Network where he's ministering to young millennials. And since then, he's become widely known... travels worldwide. He's one of the core ten for Next Move. He, of course, wrote his own book now. He did it...not us...but we gave him the ability, the platform and the ability to launch and start something that's been quite successful, that most young people probably couldn't have done. So that's an example of one. And again, we're not trying to take credit for that. It's his deal.

**BK: Right, but Movement Day was part of his story also.**

MA: It is and he's gotten to speak at many of our conferences and cities, and he's been able to get connected with people who he would have never been able to get connected to before and he's become a trusted partner now and someone that people really admire and look up to.

**BK: In terms of some of the core initiatives, is there any statistical evidence that the needle is being moved in some way or do you have anecdotal evidence or any stories in regard to, say racial reconciliation that's happening in the city?**

MA: So yeah, so I told you it was important to build up these pastor coalitions and we initially started as a Dallas thing. I'm the one who's expanding it to DFW, but we started as a Dallas thing. And again, I'm not trying to take credit for all of this - I'm just saying that because these Dallas areas pastors met and started trusting each other and started having a relationship with each other, we built and started a program called a Pulpit Swap, where a racially diverse church pastor would go switch pulpits with the other one, with the hope that not only would they do that, but that they would get some of their lay ministry people together to work together on projects and Bible studies or prayer and whatever that might be. We had as you've seen in the news, we've had racial issue of police shooting - multiple police shots - in the Dallas area in the summer of 2016. What you see in other cities is that there's often rioting that takes place, the whole town gets ripped apart, that kind of stuff. When ours happened, our major called two of our core pastors who are in the pastor coalition group who then contacted the rest of the pastor coalition, and we all came down to downtown Dallas for a prayer service. And they calmed the city down. That continued to take place so there was no rioting and there was no violence because the church stepped in, and I believe that if we hadn't had those relationships of those pastors building, that wouldn't have happened.

**BK: That's great. How often do the pastor coalitions meet together?**

MA: So that's changed. An upside and a downside. So, we started really hot as a big splash. And that's hard to sustain financially, physically and programmatically and all that kind of stuff. So, when I came in after three years of that, I felt like we had used up a lot of relationships along the way, and so mine has been more of a re-building in the last three years. It was sort of like we started hot and then we started coming down and now we're going back up again. It

didn't have to be that way, but that's what ended up happening. And so, one of our biggest challenges is maintaining this for a long period of time is not easy. So, I probably would not recommend someone going in super-hot with the first one. I think you need to build on it. I think, while it was wonderful and well received, I actually think it kind of hurt us. I'm not sure I answered what your question was now.

**BK: Well, that was very relevant to our context, but I was asking how often the pastor coalitions meet?**

MA: You did! I'm sorry I didn't even answer that! They were meeting more on a monthly basis and then it became more quarterly and now in Dallas, they're haphazard now. And so, I've been trying to decide – so I've been building newer ones in other areas, but for Dallas I've been trying to decide if we try to revive the current one and make a difference with that or do I really just start again? And start building one up and almost kind of transfer over from the other one, so it's almost a fresh start? I'm not sure, we're evaluating that. But you have to be careful with the pastor coalitions meetings. If it's going to be one of these where - pastors, well, obviously have busy schedules - and if you bring them in once a month, and all they're doing is having some program about somethings that's going on, that might be fun for about six months, but after some time you can kind of go, "I'm not sure how that's beneficial to me and do I want to keep being a part of that?" What you really have to be doing is you have to be involved in round tabling and how they're going to invest their time and their church and be part of something. And you can have some speakers along the way and some programming around that. You just got to be careful that they don't end up having an infomercial and everything, and I have to be careful that we're not looking like we're trying to control things, either. This is more pastor led and not MovementDFW led.

**BK: I see. Thank you so much Mark, this has been really helpful.**

MA: I wish the best for you and your family and your church and if Movement Day is something that will work out well in Boston, I hope that it'll work out well.

## APPENDIX E

### INTERVIEW WITH ROB KELLY (JANUARY 20, 2020)

**BK: Can you state your name and role with Movement Day?**

RK: My name is Rob Kelly, and my role is that I am a partner with Movement Day. I'm the President and CEO of FORCLT (For Charlotte), a city network in Charlotte, N.C. We have partnered with MOVEMENT.ORG in the past in my role as head of FORCLT. I was also the primarily directional leader for 2 different Movement Day Charlotte events but those are technically FORCLT events not MOVEMENT.ORG events. I don't know if you know how that is structured, but it's more of a partnership or a branding agreement with MOVEMENT.ORG but they are owned and operated FORCLT.

**BK: So, using the terminology of MOVEMENT.ORG they would consider your Movement Day event a Movement Day an expression, is that correct?**

RK: Yes, they would consider a Movement Day expression, and we would just view as a gathering that FORCLT hosts like we host many other gatherings.

**BK: Got it . So, I wanted to ask you very specifically about those two Movement Day events. They were called Movement Day, is that correct?**

RK: Movement Day Charlotte

**BK: And which years were they?**

RK: February 2018 and March 2019.

**BK: What led you to run the first Movement Day Charlotte and what made you decide to run it again?**

RK: The short version is, I had been a part of the New York Movement Days for many years. I was coming to some of the earlier ones, I think, I can't remember which was the first one I went to - 2012 or 2013 maybe and had been going to them. This is while we were building FORCLT and so it was a place where I could go and connect with other people who were doing city networks around the country. As FORCLT was growing and through building relationships with other city leaders and with the leaders of MOVEMENT.ORG, we began to connect and realize that this was a potentially good opportunity to bring in more connectivity...Movement Day is good at building connectivity with business leaders, non-profit leaders, and pastors in the city. We had a lot of pastoral connectivity already in the city, but this was a chance to kind of expand that a little bit and so we thought that it was a good fit for connecting in multiple streams as well as helping cast on a very broad scale in a neutral convening space a vision for citywide collaboration. So, we thought that it was a good fit for where we were going and help accelerate what was already in process.

**BK: And what made you decide to have the second Movement Day Charlotte?**

RK: The way we felt with year one was that no one had a clue what anything was and it was more like a “Can we get everyone in the room?” and we did it, and it was really great; it was pretty successful and it caused a stir. Year two, we were spending a lot of time trying to move toward action. So, the goal was for it to launch more collaborative initiatives or to accelerate existing collaborative initiatives and so we really had a focus on using the day for ongoing impact in the city.

**BK: I know Movement Day likes to use the language of pressing realities. Were there specific pressing realities that For Charlotte wanted to address?**

RK: Yeah. We had been doing research for a long time, and we use the language of “stubborn facts of the city”. I’m not sure if you received a copy of our State of the City Report, maybe I can get you a copy of it.

It’s broken into five areas of need in the city which calling the five M’s. 1) Mobility matters, 2) Marginalized Matters 3) Millennials and Gen Z I mean the 4) marketplace matters and 5) multiplication matters and so what we did after doing a ton of research (we have a research staff that works on this year-round), we kind of summarized the physical, spiritual, and the societal needs into those kind of five overarching categories and it allows us to dig in more on them in a way that is using language that is reproducible. Engaging those overarching needs is the primary basis of how we were mobilizing the big C church to engage the needs of the city.

**BK: Within those over-arching themes, were there specific outcomes that you were hoping to go for in terms of collective actions? Were there specific needles that you wanted to move?**

RK: Yeah, I think the easiest thing would be to give you the Movement Day impact report that we did that was kind of a follow-up from all of the initiatives. It has all the overarching: “here’s what we plan to do, here’s what we did, here were the outcomes;” and we have it all in a document that we gave to all of our donors. It was done right after the event. I think it would be the easiest way to communicate. We launched or accelerated 6 different initiatives, 4 of which had a pretty decent outcomes, foster care, and literacy. We were already doing the art of laboring but we promoted it well at the event and we had 100 churches participate in it last fall, and then a prayer initiative that didn’t go super well (in fact, we are recreating this year) and some scripture engagement things through ABS, and Generous City which is a partnership with the National Christian Foundation).<sup>34</sup>

**BK: Which ones were the ones that you felt like a decent outcomes?**

RK: All had decent outcomes really, except for prayer. We got 30-ish churches to sign up for a day, but we are reinventing the entire thing. That’s very subjective. We are reinventing that entire initiative for a launch happening in 2020. It needs cleaner architecture and that’s what we’re providing for it right now.

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34. FORCLT lists six initiatives in their impact report: Foster Care, Literacy, Becoming a Generous City, The Art of Neighboring, Pray for Charlotte, and Uniting the Church on Mission.

At the time the Generous City numbers were not great at Movement Day. But subsequently through later work, partnering FORCLT and NCF, we actually had a pretty good year. Just the actual day itself wasn't super great for mobilization numbers.

**BK: Great. It's interesting to me that all the different cities are using their own language as they engage in these events. I am primarily interacting with the NY language, just so you know where some of my questions are coming from. One of the things that Movement Days talking is about is trying to accelerate, inspire, and catalyze a city gospel movement and I don't know how much you use that language, but how would you define a gospel movement in the city?**

RK: Yeah, I would say you have to be very careful with that language. I'm doing quite a bit of writing on it right now. So FORCLT is not a city gospel movement. FORCLT is a nonprofit organization. It's a backbone agency. Movement Day Charlotte is not a city gospel movement. It's an event and I think it's better to define reality and call things what they are. I pray for a city gospel movement in the city of Charlotte everyday but if you are going to ascribe ownership to it, you should only ascribe a gospel movement to the Holy Spirit, and secondarily, maybe the city, but not to an organization. FORCLT as an organization certainly desires to create environments where the gospel can thrive, which we know that the gospel moves and thrives most effectively through the unity of the church, which our Lord Jesus prays for in John 17 and you can find throughout the rest of Scripture, but we are one of many churches, backbone organizations, nonprofits that are seeking the renewal flourishing and transformation of the city that God has placed us in. So, in that sense, a city gospel movement is kind of a modern expression used to describe a place-based revival which is a common thing throughout history, right? The city: the place of revival. The gospel: the mode of revival. And movement: the unity of the body of Christ coming together on mission to work collaboratively. As Peter talks about in Acts, "There will be times of refreshing that come from the Lord," that's initiated and sustained by the work of the Spirit. We are trying to align and participate ourselves with it. So yeah, that's kind of how I see how organizations like FORCLT, and Movement Day Charlotte can certainly support the role of the gospel movement in the city and certainly energize it, but ultimately it is the work of the spirit which is actually what creates and sustains it.

**BK: If someone were to ask you if a city gospel movement were to happen in Charlotte, how would you know it's happening? What would be the signs and indicators that a gospel movement in Charlotte was happening?**

RK: Yeah so these are very subjective terms too and there's been ideas. Some have tried to define a city gospel movement as when the Christian population in a city is growing faster than the population as a whole in the city and I think that sounds good, but I think it is subjective. It is a subjective way of trying to describe an objective reality. That is problematic actually, if you actually work out the numbers on it. I would argue that there are many different ways that you could see the movement of the Spirit in cities. Work out the numbers on that, let's say your city grows by a million people and grows 100%, but the Christian population grows 50%. Well that wasn't a gospel movement. No, I would argue that that's amazing!

On the flip side, in the midst of persecution and tragedy, and the church comes together to serve, and you see homelessness end through the unity of the church, then I would say the

gospel is working like crazy in the midst of that. And so, I don't think there is one single definition that can encapsulate how the Holy Spirit decides to move. The number one rule of mission is context, context, context. Mission is always local so that means the Holy Spirit is moving uniquely in a localized way in places, communities, and cities and towns and nations around the world. And how he decides to move is up to him. And I think the evidences of his movement is going to look different in different places because the context drives everything. I'm not sure if that's too obscure of an answer but I don't think there's one definition that you can objectively point to. I know I've stepped on toes with my answer on this one before but it's what I believe and I happy to be wrong or have others disagree with me.

**BK: I think I understand what you're saying.**

RK: It's a missiological question, right? How do you know a revival broke out? Well, typically we only talk about that in the past tense. It is something that you look back on and say that God moved like crazy in that time and this happened. Certainty I think there are themes that historically you can look back on that are similar. Themes like, large amounts of repentance in the church. Individuals leading to corporate repentance. You see the theme of the proclamation of the word of God going and landing on ears and the next generation hearing them. Often times it is led and spawned by the younger generations and it is evidenced by many coming to faith, certainly. You see prayer and the united believing prayer. You think of A. T. Pierson in the Third Great Awakening, "There's never been a spiritual awakening in a country or locality that did not first begin with united, believing prayer" and I always loved that and reading that in seminary. So there are themes: you're seeing the body of Christ praying together, you're seeing the proclamation of the word of God, you're seeing the younger generations both leading and coming to faith, you're seeing repentance and creating a repentance canvas for God to move in people's lives and communities lives. These are certain themes that you would see, and many would come to faith and it would be amazing. But the amount, the way, the mode, all of those things are highly contextual but there are common themes. So that's the way I see it.

**BK: As you reflect on those two Movement Days, what were the greatest successes? What are you most happy about in terms of having done a Movement Day Charlotte?**

RK: I think the engagement numbers were great. I think probably the biggest one was casting a unified vision for city transformation. I think it created language that was helpful, even though we and a lot of other groups had been working at this type of work for a long time, it shined a spotlight for the need for unity and collaboration within the church (big C church) together for the city. I think to be able to do this type of work you have to have a neutral convening ability. Movement Day expressions certainly are great neutral convening space, if you will. And I think that was super helpful.

**BK: On the flipside, what were the greatest challenges about running a Movement Day expression?**

RK: I can only speak to ours. The amount of time and money it takes. It began to be like an opportunity cost. In a sense it takes so long to plan something of this scale and so much money to pay for it all for one day. It doesn't mean that it's not valuable, but it's incredibly challenging. And it led to not being able to do other things because you only have limited time and capacity

and so it's an incredible amount of time and money... for a day. And so, if we ever do something else like this, the architecture would certainly be different because we have too many ongoing operational things going throughout the year that we couldn't forsake to do a gathering again, if that makes sense. The gathering would be more niche and smaller. I don't want to speculate, but it would really have to support what's going on. Now that there's momentum and things are moving so quickly in our city, which certainly Movement Day had a part in for sure, we just wouldn't want to slow any of that or stop that. We're kind of thinking about how that one day helps support the other 364 and catalyze and energize and accelerate what's happening the rest of the year. Because the rest of the year, the whole year, God's moving and that's when mission actually happens.

**BK: So, reading between the lines, it sounds like you've decided not to do Movement Day for the foreseeable future just because of the opportunity cost, because there are things going on that require your time and attention and resources more so than having another gathering.**

RK: Yeah, for sure. That's not a reading between the lines, it's just is what it is. We have networks of pastors meeting all over the city. We have initiatives that are working collaboratively to engage the needs of the city. We have technology that running to connect non-profits and schools to engage collaboratively. There's a lot going on that is 24/7/365 that's helping create a new operating system for the church in the city. So, a Movement Day expression, like any other gathering...people don't like it when we use the word "product" but it is a "product" and it's a good product and it should be used to accelerate what God is doing in the city. It's on the shelf and you can take it off the shelf when it is needed and so that comes with prayer, discernment, and leadership. I'm not saying we're not doing it again, I never said that. The rhythm of it. We had a couple of years to get this vision off the ground or help get the vision more off the ground. Now it's more about how we leverage it moving forward to most effectively serve what God is doing in the city. We're not doing it in 2020, but maybe 2021 and 2022, our board and leaders would have to pray and decide.

**BK: I appreciate you clarifying that. In Boston as we consider our own Movement Day type gathering, I think what we were thinking about how this would look like in our city, but we're hoping that it won't take that much in terms of resources because we're not planning a huge gathering, we're planning something smaller. Are we fooling ourselves? Is there a way to run a Movement Day without that incredible use of money and time?**

RK: I think you can certainly do it for cheaper than we did it and certainly less time. But the leaders in our city said, "If we are going to do this, we're going to do it top of the line, everything." We wanted to be as neutral as possible. We talked a lot about how we wanted it to be central and neutral. That meant we went to a convention center in uptown and we went to a location in the city. It didn't belong to any one church or organization. It was truly city wide. It wasn't niche and it wasn't small. It was all leaders, all sectors. So, the scope was large.

With the goals that we had; it would be hard to do a small version of that. If you hosted in a church, it belongs to that church, whether it does or not. If it's a couple hundred people, when Boston is x million people, I mean is it really going to drive or move needles, if not all the

right people are in the room? Not that you'll ever get all the right people in the room, but you know what I'm saying. So, the goal was using all the time and effort to get all the right people in the room together around a very clearly defined clear and articulated goal and vision. And to do that really well, it takes an incredible amount of time and money.

Not to mention the right leaders planning it, capacity, the right influencers leveraging the right influence...so to me it comes down to what is your goal? You can have a small Movement Day gathering and say, we're going to address this issue only and we're going to get 100 leaders engaging that issue. Honestly that would be awesome. That would probably be more effective, quite frankly, because you get everyone around one single thing. But then you have to ask the question, is it catalyzing something that is truly holistic and city wide? And the answer is no. It's niche. But niche is good though, you have to go after what you really want. Ours was looking at the holistic, big, mega vision. I don't know if that's helpful, but that's what we think about it.

**BK: That's very helpful. Between the first and second Movement Day Charlotte, what changes did you make in terms of the architecture or the goals?**

RK: I think the biggest changes were that we were very intentional about the architecture of what came after it. It's not that we didn't have things that we were pointing people to before, but we spent as much time planning initiatives coming out of Movement Day 2019, as we did planning the actual day. So, the content of the actual day aligned with what we were mobilizing people to do after the day. But that meant working with different backbone agencies, like Read Charlotte around literacy, and Congregations for Kids (CFK) around foster care, we were leading the Art of Neighboring, NCF leading the Generous Cities. So, there were tons of time and meetings about how it's going to work out, what are the follow up steps...working with them on targeted recruitment to get those that we needed in the room to drive those initiatives. Very clear next steps.

I would say the architecture was just much more defined in year two compared to year one. In year one, I mean, if Bishop Claude<sup>35</sup> were here, he would say, "We just wanted to see if we could get the people in the room in year one." And we did! And all of a sudden, we had standing room only and it was really great. But we didn't know what to expect in essence though. Much more defined in year two.

**BK: That sounds to me that there needs to be incredible trust that's been built in the room already for people to say, "Yes, we're going to get on board with the initiative that you've already planned." One of the challenges as we think about our city is that a lot of times, there are people who don't necessarily want to be part of it if there already is a plan, because they weren't part of the conception of the plan. How did you build that trust?**

RK: Yes, I think this type of work is a social capital experiment. It's about leveraging the trust of multiple people working collaboratively. People are leveraging the trust that you have with the group, and you are leveraging the trust that other people have, and you are working

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35. Claude Alexander, Lead Pastor of The Park Church in Charlotte, NC, and Chair of the Board of Trustees at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

collaboratively with kingdom centered goals. So, I would argue that yes, people will co-own that they co-create, but the co-creation that went into the initiative was collaborative in nature with, what you can call, “the major players” in those spaces, prior to. Or in the case of something like Read Charlotte, they already had clearly established themselves as the clear experts and neutral conveners in the area of literacy in our city. So, it’s really about how we effectively align the church with what the city had already established.

And others it was just what they had co-created prior. I think one of the benefits, I would argue, of doing something smaller is that, if really facilitated well with folks like Mark Mattlock, and stuff that were done in other cities, like in New York, you can do co-creation in a smaller gathering, for sure. But the pre architecture of how you frame everything is what matters. You still are defining where you are going by the architecture of the actual conversation you’re having the leaders have. But you are still pointing them in the right direction. And so, that’s where architecture really does matter on all of this stuff. But yes, trust is a necessity. It takes time to build it. They say that trust is gained in thimbles and lost in buckets? It takes a long time to gain trust and you can lose it in a heartbeat in one stupid decision or statement or whatever.

**BK: What advice would you give to someone who is considering hosting their own Movement Day expression?**

RK: I would be super prayerful and get a prayer team first. Don’t jump on it because you’ve seen other cities do it and you think my city can do what that city can do. Be really prayerful about it. Bring a lot of people in that discernment process with you. Make sure the core leaders are all discerning it in the right time effectively. You’re going to commit something that’s going to take a lot of time, money, effort, resources...a lot of trust. You’re leveraging a lot of social capital on it as well. And then ask for wisdom! God gives it... And discernment. And really... is this what your city needs at this time? I think you ask the right questions, first to God and then through conversations with the leaders in the city. To me it’s a discerning process. How would you go into any major decision for your organization right? This is no different. This has a large scope to it. And certainly, the consequence is magnified, I would say. So, you want to be super prayerful and super discerning. I wish we had gotten our prayer team up and going earlier than we did. It ended up catalyzing a great group of intercessors in our city, but we were into the process a ways before we formalized it. And I would have done that earlier for sure. Yeah, that’s what comes to mind.

**BK: So you had these specific initiatives you had in mind to come out of your second Movement Day...in organizing the event, what were the critical factors in making sure people were able to get on board and partnered together in those initiatives?**

RK: The biggest thing was that we wanted whatever was happening to be truly aligned to the needs of the city. I have an approach to city transformation that we’ve been using for years now, and really, it’s about how do you marry the biblical convictions and mission of the church with the needs of the city, which oftentimes is not the case. That’s why we put so much time and energy and resources into the research.

So, every initiative, if you want to create an alignment, there was a need for the city as defined by the state of the city (under the 5 Ms). There were initiatives that were aligned under

one of those overarching needs of the city. And we would try to focus on those that were the highest impact and highest leverage. So, the highest ability to leverage or scale between multiple organizations for the greatest possible impact. Then, the architecture of the Movement Day expression itself, the actual day was aligned then with the leaders of the initiatives that were driving the collaboration to meet the needs of the city. You see the progression, right? So, that would be the architecture.

**BK: In terms of the day itself, what did it look like? Did everybody hear each of the five or six initiatives? Was there a presentation on each? Were there break out groups? Was there a focus on one?**

RK: Yes, yes, and yes. I think all of them were referenced from stage. Some of them were especially in panels, like there were panel discussions that really drove the initiatives. But then there were breakouts on most of them. I need to go back and check...prayer didn't have a breakout... I think the rest did. One of the reasons why prayer wasn't that effective was because the architecture wasn't done well, and it was added too late. And so, no surprise, we're redoing the architecture this year because the initiative itself wasn't... It was a lesson learned from us for sure. But the rest of them did have a break-out. So, we had the main stage, supplementary and breakout.

**BK: Just a few more questions. How helpful was the Movement Day branding for your conference? Looking back, would you rename it and do something that was uniquely for Charlotte or are you happy having called it Movement Day Charlotte ?**

RK: It's okay now. The first year was tough in the sense that people thought the way that it was communicated was its own organization, which made the branding more difficult, especially for the backbone organization FORCLT that was putting it on. A little like the tail wagging the dog if that makes sense. We completely changed that in year two and made sure that it was an event presented by For Charlotte. Movement Day Charlotte produced by FORCLT. A lot of people actually, I'm going to step on some toes here from MOVEMENT.ORG... they're but my friends but that's okay. They love me and I love them. They don't like it when you talk about Movement Day as just a day. I couldn't disagree more. I think Movement Day is an awesome day! And I think you should make it as the most awesome day that it could be. They will talk about Movement Day as a process, which it certainly is, it's not wrong. But for a context like ours where there is a backbone entity that is putting it on, it is a product and it's a really great product. And you want to use it to drive and accelerate and celebrate what God is doing in the city. And you do it super well. But you need to frame it appropriately and position it appropriately for the greatest impact. You don't want the tail to wag the dog. You don't want to make it about the day. The day is about bringing people together and make it about what God is doing in the city. And it does have the potential and we saw that a little bit in the first year to become about the event or the brand itself. And it's not. It's about what God is doing in your city. And so, you want to make the day really great to point out what God is doing in the city and how the church can work collaboratively. And so, in essence the branding may have worked too well the first year, if you want to think about it in that sense. We had to reposition the second year to actually get it more aligned with the actual goal and vision of what we're trying to do.

**BK: That makes sense. There are quite a few in Boston who would not like it if we called it a Movement Day.**

RK: Many cities don't. Who knows? Maybe in the future we may change brands. I don't know - I'm not planning or not planning to do it, but I know of many cities that absolutely call it something totally different. But it will still be connected to the more global network of MOVEMENT.ORG, of cities that are working together. You just don't call it a Movement Day.

**BK: Would you mind giving a few praise reports? You said that five out of six initiatives are doing pretty well. How do you define well? What is exciting for you in terms of those initiatives and its impact that it's made in Charlotte?**

RK: I mean, probably, numerically, the greatest impact would be... well I don't know if this is a Movement Day impact, we talked about it and spoke to it on Movement Day... This is something where you need to be really careful with appropriately positioning a conference. I don't think it's appropriate to give credit to a conference for work that's going on throughout the year. You announced something there or you equipped people about something there, but if you're appropriately positioning the conference then you're saying it was successful because x amount of people signed up for it on that day. Not necessarily the fruit that came out of that collaboration, which took multiple organizations working together throughout the entire year to do. And the Holy Spirit working all of that together. So, to me, the way I think, you're trying to appropriately position what is successful for an event, right? And so, for that, we said, we gauged the success of the event as how many people actually signed up for something at the event. Maybe it's too plain of a way of thinking about it. I don't know if that is helpful, but I can give you the impact report of who signed up for what.

**BK: That would be great. Actually, everyone I've interviewed so far has said something similar...I don't think anyone wants to give the credit primarily to the event itself.**

RK: I've just very wary in general of vanity metrics. I don't know if you've heard that phrase before?

**BK: I have not.**

RK: It's just the idea of "Hey, look what we did" so we can raise money for it. You have to be careful. I think that we have to always be pushing for honesty and transparency. Was there a true shared experience where the spirit was doing something powerful in people's lives and as a community? At some level it will be anecdotal and experiential but it's true. Did people sign up and say, "Let's do this together"? They voted with their feet and sign up for things? That's amazing! Celebrate that and celebrate what happened on that day, and how God can use that to catalyze more people to join later and all over the work that goes in throughout the year. But you don't say that because we've held this day, the city was transformed. I think that's vanity. I struggle with that. I struggle with defining a city gospel movement as an organization. I think it's theologically weak and wrong, actually. I think it's hermeneutically lazy and I believe it to be pragmatically, actually disruptive for the organization. It puts a lot of pressure on one individual and/or organization that is driving a city gospel movement. No, it's the work of the Spirit. We're called to be faithful! And it puts a lot of undue pressure on any one entity. I think we need to

appropriately position ourselves as backbone agencies, connecting agencies, equipping agencies that help serve a very important place in the city-wide ecosystem but we're not the ecosystem. So, I try to be really careful with the language I use just because I've heard it abused so many times and I don't think it's helpful at all.

**BK: I really appreciate your time. Thank you.**

RK: Hope this is helpful! Looking forward to reading your project.

## APPENDIX F

### INTERVIEW WITH GLENN McDOWELL (FEBRUARY 19, 2020)

**BK: Can I begin by asking you to state your name, the organization, and the role in the organization for the record.**

GM: Sure. Glenn McDowell with Philadelphia Gospel Movement. And my role is co-chair of the Philadelphia Gospel Movement.

**BK: What led you to run the first Philadelphia Movement Day? Maybe to put it another way is: what were the outcomes you hope to achieve with that?**

GM: Let me start with a broader perspective. The broader perspective is that we want to see Philadelphia blessed and flourish spiritually, economically, and socially, in other words, to see the Lord's Prayer, your kingdom come, your will be done in Philadelphia, as it is in heaven. And we want to be an answer to that prayer or participate in God answering that prayer. And we also want to participate in Jesus's prayer in John 17, "Father may they may be one as you and I are one," - speaking of himself and the Father and also the Holy Spirit, the Trinity - "that the world may believe that you sent me." So we want to see the gospel flourish and God's kingdom flourish in our city and we see Movement Day as one way to celebrate the good things God's doing here; let's get the word out to the amazing things, miraculous things that God is doing in our city, and also to accelerate greater collaboration in the body of Christ to advance the Kingdom.

**BK: Those are great goals. I know that MOVEMENT.ORG and Mac Pier have talked a lot about stubborn realities in their cities that they hope to address beginning with Movement Day. Were there particular stubborn realities that you were seeing in Philadelphia that you also wanted to address beyond the celebration, unity, and so on so forth?**

GM: Yes, Philadelphia has some big stubborn realities. Of the 10 largest cities in the US, we have the highest poverty rate - about 25%. We also have the highest deep poverty rate, which is people 50% under the poverty rate. So, there are a lot of people who don't have jobs even though they're seeking jobs, or who have employment but at minimum wage. You can't have food and housing, and basic needs in our city with the minimum wage. And so, we have big issues here: there's opioid and other addictions at a very high level, very high-level deaths in the last three years through opioid overdoses. But on the first Movement Day which we did November of 2019, we didn't try to address those issues.

The first thing we thought we needed to do is to bring diverse elements of the body of Christ together and begin to get to know one another and begin to build trust. So, we had three things we talked about at Movement Day. One was building trust through getting to know one another. Second, we wanted to talk about unity and what it might look like to think that unity is important within the body of Christ across people who are otherwise very different. And then third, we want to talk about raising up a younger generation of leaders for the future of the church.

So those were the things we talked about – trust, unity, and the younger generation of leaders - rather than talk about deep needs in our city on our first Movement Day.

**BK: I assume that was a strategic decision: to address unity before you can address those realities?**

GM: Yes, because in our city, the body of Christ, maybe more than any other North American city - I only have only have anecdotal evidence on this - but more than other cities, the body of Christ is very divided and isolated by generations, between city and suburbs, by ethnicities, by cultures, by denomination and that's been true going back to colonial times in Philadelphia, sadly.

**BK: I wanted to ask a more theological question. How do you define gospel movement? What is a gospel movement for you?**

GM: Centered on Jesus. Centered on who Jesus is and his life, his death, his resurrection, his ascension, and his reign so we want to see his reign and kingdom extend, not only so that the church is healthy but so that our city in its entirety is blessed. So, we talked about the city flourishing spiritually, economically, and culturally and advancing the common good. Though we make it a priority to bring connections within the body of Christ, we also want to work with others who might want to advance the common good, like the city government, the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, and so many different social service agencies and nonprofits.

**BK: What was the thinking behind naming the Philadelphia Gospel Movement, Philadelphia Gospel Movement?**

GM: This is our city, I mean, the city itself, of course means the City of Brotherly Love, so that's something we talked about that we want to actually reflect the name of our city much more.

**BK: I'm sorry, my emphasis wasn't actually on the city. I understand putting Philadelphia in there. But why did you call your organization "gospel movement"?**

GM: Okay, so "gospel" because it's centered on Jesus...and "movement" because... I'm least comfortable with the third word "movement" because we're not yet a movement. That's an aspiration. And sometimes I think we should change our name. If there's going to be a movement here, truly a gospel movement, it's going to be a work of the Holy Spirit, a sovereign work, of bringing revival to his people and renewal to our city. And so, a movement is not something we will do, it is something God will do. So, it sometimes almost feels a little arrogant that we have that is part of our name.

**BK: How did you ready Philadelphia for the first Movement Day? What were the steps that led up to the first Movement Day?**

GM: A lot of work over the decades that preceded me and our team's involvement which has only been, in some respects, more consciously in the last decade on my part and in the last 3-4 years with some of the people who are on our team. But we're standing on the shoulders of people who...for example, Christian Endeavor who, in the early and mid-twentieth century, worked to bring Christians together in many neighborhoods in Philadelphia and sometimes had

gatherings and marches of thousands of people across many denominations. Back in the 1800s, John Wanamaker, who was a Christian businessman and also the secretary at the YMCA in Philadelphia, worked to bring greater unity among Christians of many denominations in Philadelphia even though he was a Presbyterian himself.

So, we're on the shoulders of many. A significant event in Philadelphia was in 1992 when Billy Graham's Crusade came here, and remnants of some of the people, who worked together across ethnicities for that Billy Graham crusade, are participating with us now over 30 years later. So the preparations for Movement Day were not something that was organized within a year or a few months, it really was built on relationships. But I would say the last three years, we've been very intentional in bringing relationships of people normally would not be in the same room with one another but nevertheless are brothers and sisters.

When we actually made the plans for Movement Day itself, we did not publicize it to the Christian public. For example, we didn't put flyers out in churches or advertise it in church bulletins. Specifically, for the first Movement Day, we wanted Christian leaders to be there so we could connect with people who would have an influence in their sphere, whether they are Christian businesspeople or other professionals, or Christian artists and pastors and ministry leaders. And that's who came. We're very grateful and amazed for who the Lord brought there. I would say, the exception of the people who might have a significant sphere of influence, but we also intentionally invited, were the younger generation people who would be future leaders or potentially future leaders. We did want people under 30 well-represented as well as people who are already well-established as leaders in their own sphere.

**BK: Would you mind describing that first Movement Day? How many people came and the format of the Movement Day itself?**

GM: We had about 350 people there. We had people from maybe 20 different ethnicities including people from other cultures who have immigrated to Philadelphia. We had a surprisingly even geographic spread; from the city which is 1.6 million people and the surrounding counties so with the city and the surrounding counties - Greater Philadelphia is five to six million people depending on where the boundary is. And we had fairly even representation from the neighborhoods throughout the entire city Philadelphia and from all the surrounding counties of Philadelphia. At one point, during the program, we had people get together with people either in their county or by their neighborhood. We actually have too many neighborhoods in Philadelphia so we couldn't do it by every neighborhood, so we had to group regions of neighborhoods in Philadelphia and got people together. And then we had people from 5 different generations, 20 years-old, college students, to people probably 90 years-old. And then we had people across the spectrum of denominations and different languages...although we didn't do any translation (everything was in English) but we know we had people there who spoke many different languages.

**BK: What number were you hoping for when you were thinking of a venue? I'm sure you had an idea of how many - or the range of people that might come?**

GM: Well, our goal was two or three hundred people. So, we actually exceeded our goal. And we had people at the end, not surprisingly, in the last few days, who wanted to register who were just hearing about it from friends.

**BK: Could you describe the format of the day briefly?**

GM: Sure, the format was intentionally very interactive, so we purposely did not have any speakers, anyone on a platform, speak for more than 15 minutes and typically it was like six or seven minutes that they spoke. We had a very gifted facilitator, Mark Matlock, facilitate most of the day for us. And we followed a format that we had used six months earlier for smaller meeting where people sat around tables and interacted around the tables. The facility which we met at - Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church - was a wonderful facility and we intentionally did not meet in their worship hall. We met in their fellowship hall which is just a large room where tables are set up. We didn't use their tables because their tables would have sat 8 people to a table. We rented small tables to sit 4 to a table, even though it was an extra expense because we intentionally wanted a lot of interaction with groups of 4, but then we moved people around. For example, we intentionally got someone from who was under 35 sit at a table and then we said, "If you're over 55, go sit at the table...and then everyone else sit at the remaining empty seats." We had people basically interview each other around Kingdom issues. Throughout the day people moved from one table to another and interacted over questions such as: if God's people in your neighborhood worked together, what could you accomplish for the kingdom that you can't do alone? Or your church that can't do it alone?

We started with a corporate worship time for which we intentionally did not get a worship band. We wanted it simple. We had one man and a keyboard lead us in worship and so that was intentional so that the focus wasn't on the band or the performance, but the focus was engaging our hearts in worship. And one of the things we got in feedback afterwards was that people really appreciated that worship time and wished it was even longer.

**BK: It sounds like it went really well.**

GM: It did. I was amazed. I think all of us in our team were amazed...we really saw the work of God particularly at work there. I mean that was our desire was to get people together who normally would not meet and for them to interact. And I'm still, on a regular basis, hearing about people who met that day and have since reconnected or deepened those connections. So that in itself was not something that we could program but something that God did just bring people and having them sit together at the table.

**BK: That's great. It's been 3 months since the last Movement Day. Are you planning another Movement Day this November?**

GM: We are. We have a date for the first Friday of this November of 2020. So there's always an ambivalence in doing a big event like this because it takes a lot of work and the ambivalence is, are you focusing your energy in preparing for this one day event or are you focusing your energy on the bigger picture of what we're trying to do - 365 days a year - which is to build greater collaboration and trust within the body of Christ to bless our city, spiritually, socially, and economically. And the second thing is our priority, which is to continue to build relationships and build the body of Christ in our city, including the outcome of more people coming to faith in Jesus; deep needs in the city are met; even the culture is changed to reflect God's kingdom more. So we're not spending our time throughout the year preparing for Movement Day and in fact, we do have a date set, but we haven't actually started direct

preparations for Movement Day yet, or what it's going to look like because we want to make sure that we're still following up on things coming out of the last Movement Day.

**BK: What are those things that came out of Movement Day that you are following up on?**

GM: Yeah, so there was a lot of energy and spiritual energy coming out of that and in the small groups around tables, we had people write out on 3x5 cards and then on post it notes write things that they wanted to do. Then we had them come together in larger groups to narrow down through voting on what is a priority, culminating in a number of priorities that we posted in big post-it posters on the walls. And the result was lots of ideas which we would not be able to fulfill, at least not in one year, and not something that we could organize.

So instead of trying to do that, what we're seeking to do is focus on a few neighborhoods where we could bring significant kingdom change. We're in the process of evaluating some neighborhoods by gathering data on those neighborhoods...neighborhoods in Philadelphia, where there are deep needs. But another criteria is that there's already evidence that Christians in that neighborhood want to work together. We know that God is doing powerful things in every neighborhood in our city, so there are stories that needs to be told that come to light, both so that people within those neighborhoods know each other and hear each other's stories, and the larger body of Christ - the regional Church – can hear those stories. So, we're in the process now of looking at several neighborhoods to decide where we're going to particularly focus on in the coming few years.

**BK: So are there things that as you look at this past Movement Day, as well as it went, that you think "I wish we could have done this better" or "I would do this a little differently next time," or "if I have to do this again..."**

GM: One thing comes to mind. Even though we had great participation and we actually had more people come in the end than we originally planned for, I can always think of people that I wish were there. There was an element particularly that I think we had a gap in, and that was Christian Business Leaders, men and women who lead, whether they own their own business or corporate leaders of which there are many Christians in those roles in the Philadelphia area. We did intentionally reach out to some of the Christian business leaders but not many of them came. It shows that that's an area that we need to work on. Interacting with Bob Doll, who is the Chairman of the Board of MOVEMENT.ORG and helped with the first Movement Day in New York City, and has been involved in Movement Days all around the world, he told me that in his experience, that is typical of the first year of Movement Day in the city, that you don't have any business people involved because they are often waiting to see the results before they'll commit their time to it.

**BK: What advice would you give to someone do for a city who is considering hosting a Movement Day?**

GM: Well, I think my first advice, though it sounds contradictory, is: Don't focus on preparing a Movement Day event. Focus on building the relationships which sometimes can take years to do and then Movement Day can be a celebration of the relationships and the good things that are happening.

But they can also be an accelerator. So... you have to ...each city has to evaluate where you are and where you are in building the relationships and are you ready even to bring people together. I mean we had people in Philadelphia who thought we weren't ready to do a Movement Day because we didn't have enough relationships and networks of relationships to pull it off in the right way. And that's probably true but you can also say, you'll never be ready because you can always build more relationships.

**BK: Yeah, that's a tension that we have to navigate. It sounds like a lot of relationships were built and formed because of this Movement Day and a lot of people building relationships that would have never had before. But I guess there are some critical people you need on board before you have that Movement Day. Is that what you're saying?**

GM: I think so. It's important that it represent the various ethnicities, so we've made a strong effort here to connect the African American church leaders with Asian and Latino and White church leaders. And the largest number of churches in Philadelphia are black churches, and that's where we have our strongest base. And it's actually been harder to connect with many of the white suburban churches. But we also have strong connection with Asian and Latino churches.

If there are some major gaps not represented when you're bringing key leaders together to plan a Movement Day that might be an indication that you're not ready. There's always going to be gaps but if you have major, either ethnic gaps or cultural or denominational gaps, then that's something at least would give pause to moving ahead.

**BK: A more philosophical question...going back to the topic of gospel movement; what are the particular process of dynamics that you see happening in Movement Day that can actually catalyze a gospel movement?**

GM: Well... the question itself, I think, puts too much weight on the Movement Day event. So, I think the event is significant but having key relationships or networks or relationships doing things together before Movement Day and following Movement Day...in many cases it's not things that we [who are] involved with Movement Day create or make happen. There are lots of networks out there and just encouraging those networks or highlighting those networks and then when possible, bringing different networks together like prayer times or worship times or involving some service project. Does that answer your question?

**BK: I think it does. So, one of the things that interested me about the literature of Movement Day, at least MOVEMENT.ORG puts out, is how Movement Day can be part of catalyzing city, and I've been asking, is it really possible for a single event do actually do that? Surely there must be more going on behind the scenes.**

GM: Yeah, so I'm skeptical of that, even though we had a great Movement Day, that [Movement Day] in and of itself is going to be major catalyst, unless we continue to build on those relationships in this coming year and some of that remains to be seen.

At the same time, the former mayor of Philadelphia, Wilson Good who was one of our leadership in helping to form the Philadelphia Gospel Movement, which was a sponsor and host of Movement Day Philadelphia, when he gave a brief presentation at Movement Day Philadelphia, he made a comment along the lines that this was one of the most significant

events for the regional church in Philadelphia - that's a term I use - regional church - I forgot exactly how he put it, but one of the most significant events for Christians in Greater Philadelphia because it brought together people who have never come together before across these different lines that divide us.

**BK: I appreciate that. Obviously, it may be too much to say that a Movement Day is going to do all of these things, but there are reasons you decided to do a Movement Day despite the opportunity cost...and how you could have spent that time and resources doing something else. So, there must have been something significant. And I guess for you a lot of it has to do with building up the unity of the church making possible collaborative partnership.**

GM: Yes. And then in unity, which also reflects the oneness and the unity of the trinity, but also for the result of that unity being to bless our city for the common good.

**BK: Thanks Glenn. Those were all my questions. I really appreciate your time.**

GM: Blessings on your project!

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